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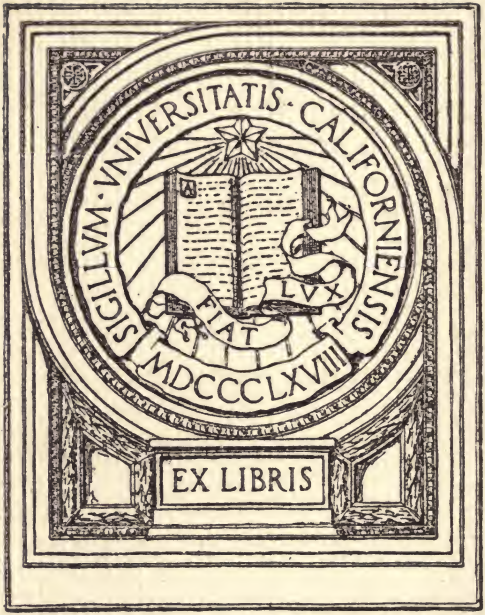
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SHYLOCK

" *'I crave the law,*
The penalty and forfeit of my bond' "

Shakespeare
"Merchant of Venice"

The Ben Greet Shakespeare

For Young Readers and Amateur Players

The Merchant of Venice

Garden City New York
Doubleday Page & Company

CALIFORNIA

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TO VIAU
ARNOLD

A FEW GENERAL RULES OR CUSTOMS OF ACTING

THE letters *R* and *L* indicate the position of players on the stage facing the audience. *R* 1, *L* 1 are the entrances nearest the front. *Go up* means from the audience; *go down* is toward the audience. *R C* is the right side of the centre, — and so forth.

When the characters enter, the person speaking generally comes second.

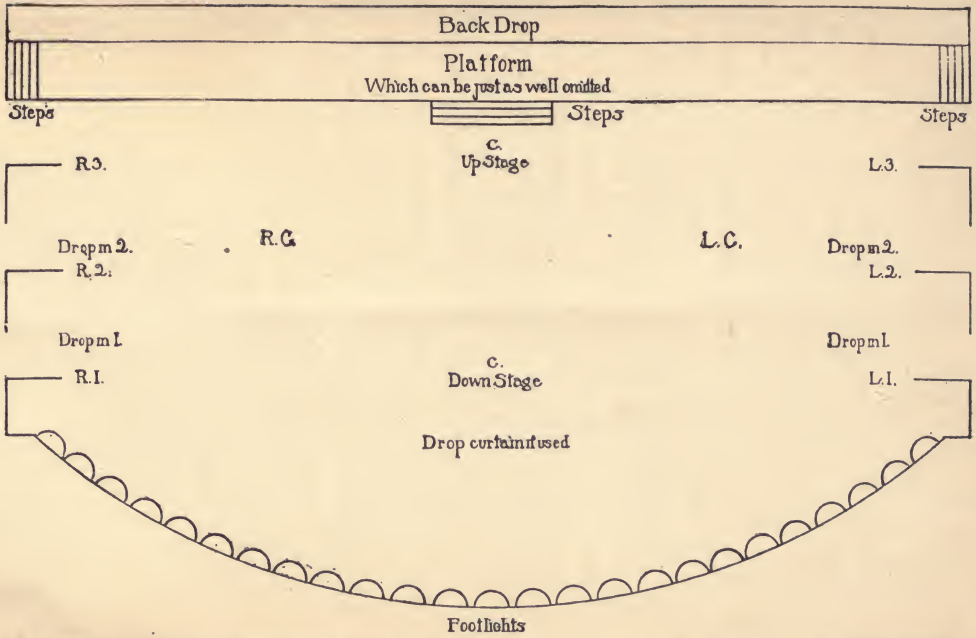
Do not huddle together; do not stand in lines; and do not get in such angles that you cannot be seen by the sides of an audience.

Stand still — keep the leg nearest the audience back, gesticulate seldom and with the hand farthest from the audience. Do not point to your chest or heart when you say *I*, *my* and *mine*, nor to your neighbor when saying *thou*, *thy*, and *thine*, unless absolutely necessary.

Try to reverse the usual acting of the present day and eliminate the personal pronoun

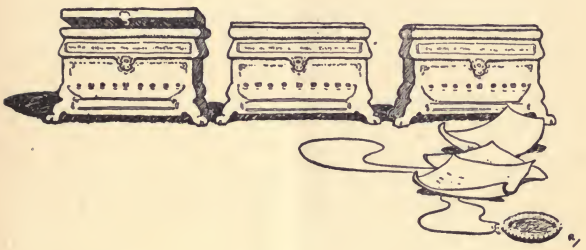
280855

Remember that Shakespeare is the most perfect English. Do not imitate some of those professors, especially teachers of what is called Elocution and Expression, if by any chance they happen to pronounce it in up-to-date American or cockney British, or tell you it was conceived in any other brogue, accent, or pronunciation than the purest of pure English. There are a few mistakes in his plays, and some printer's errors, about which volumes have been written. Study the humanity, the heart, the English of Shakespeare, as of the Bible — those two wonderful Books of the same generation — the one splendidly revised and perfected by many scholars, the other produced in a state of nature and yet almost perfect — study them, my young friends, inwardly digest your Bible and outwardly demonstrate your Shakespeare: you will then start in life pretty well equipped.



The space between the footlights and drop or folding curtain can be reduced to any dimension.

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE



UNIV. OF
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DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

The DUKE OF VENICE

The PRINCE OF MOROCCO, } *suitors to Portia.*
The PRINCE OF ARRAGON, }

ANTONIO, *a merchant of Venice.*

BASSANIO, *his friend, suitor to Portia.*

SALANIO, }
SALARINO, } *friends to Antonio and Bassanio.*
GRATIANO, }
SALERIO, }

LORENZO, *in love with Jessica.*

SHYLOCK, *a rich Jew.*

TUBAL, *a Jew, his friend.*

LAUNCELOT GOBBO, *a clown, servant to Shylock.*

OLD GOBBO, *father to Launcelot.*

LEONARDO, *servant to Bassanio.*

BALTHASAR, } *servants to*
STEPHANO, } *Portia.*

PORTIA, *a rich heiress.*

NERISSA, *her waiting-maid.*

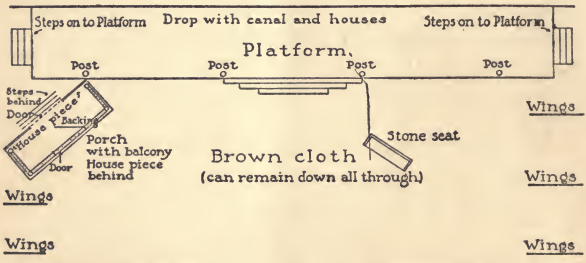
JESSICA, *daughter to Shylock.*

Magnificoes of Venice, Officers of the Court of Justice, Gaoler, Servants to Portia, and other attendants.

They enter together from L1 or are discovered, Antonio seated L C, Salanio R, Salarino L, leaning on seat.

In entering, characters should come on naturally in groups, rather than in ranks, one following the other; and should, as far as possible, be speaking as they enter. Do not wait till coming to the centre of the stage, to talk: In this entrance, Salanio and Antonio are walking together arm in arm; Salarino follows. If discovered when there is a curtain, Antonio is seated L C.

[1]*Give left hand to Salarino.*



ACT I

SCENE I. *Venice. A street.*

Enter ANTONIO (2), SALARINO (3), *and* SALANIO (1).

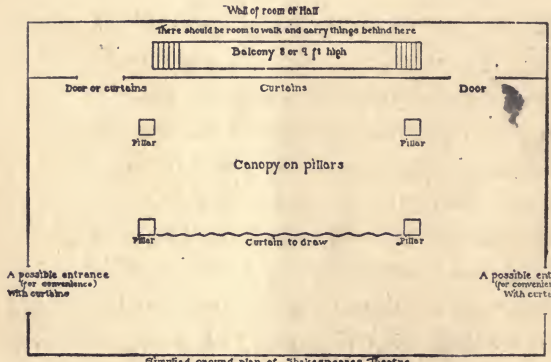
Ant. (*C*). In sooth, I know not why I am so sad;
It wearies me; you say it wearies you;
But how I caught it, found it, or came by it,
What stuff 't is made of, whereof it is born
I am to learn;
And such a want-wit sadness makes of me,
That I have much ado to know myself.[1]

Salan. (*R*). Your mind is tossing on the ocean;
There where your argosies with portly sail
Like signiors and rich burghers on the flood,
Or as it were the pageants of the sea
Do overpeer the petty traffickers.
That curtsey to them, do them reverence
As they fly by them with their woven wings.

[1]*Gives right hand to Salanio.*

[2]*Rising and laughing.*

[3]*Bassanio, Lorenzo and Gratiano laugh outside L, then enter talking.*



Simplified ground plan of Shakespeares Theatre

Salar. Believe me, sir, had I such venture forth,
The better part of my affections would
Be with my hopes abroad; and every object
That might make me fear misfortune
To my ventures, out of doubt would make me sad.
But tell not me: I know, Antonio
Is sad to think upon his merchandise.

Ant. Believe me, no[1]: I thank my fortune for it,
My ventures are not in one bottom trusted,
Nor to one place; nor is my whole estate
Upon the fortune of this present year:
Therefore my merchandise makes me not sad.

Salan. Why then you are in love.

Ant. Fie! fie! (*laughs and rises*).

Salan. (*R C*). Not in love neither: then let us say you are sad,[2]
Because you are not merry; and 'twere as easy
For you to laugh and leap and say you are merry
Because you are not sad.[3] (*Laugh.*)

Salar. Here comes Bassanio, your most noble kinsman,
Gratiano and Lorenzo. Fare ye well:
(*Crosses to R.*)

[1]*Bassanio goes directly to Antonio; they shake hands. Lorenzo next, then Gratiano.*

[2]*Exeunt Salarino and Salanio off R merrily.*

[3]*Bassanio and Lorenzo go up stage to L C together.*

[4]*Crosses to Antonio R C.*

[5]*The whole of this speech can be used. It must be spoken brightly but naturally. Gratiano is the butterfly.*

With regard to cuts generally, this arrangement is made to meet the requirements of young people and students who have difficulty in sustaining long speeches with variety of manner and flexibility of speech. The whole speech can, at all times, be restored from the text, or further cuts made, provided the rhythm and metre are preserved, and the story and plot of the play not impaired. I give here "cuts" as they are adopted on the regular stage.

If the play is given on the Shakespearian stage there should be no cuts, but such as are unsuitable to be spoken. Such things are generally unnecessary, and were intended to be omitted if desired. But it really breaks one's heart to cut a line of Shakespeare, especially a brilliant sally of wit like Gratiano's.

Enter BASSANIO, LORENZO, *and* GRATIANO *from L.*[1]

We leave you now with better company.
Salan. I would have stayed till I had made you merry,
If worthier friends had not prevented me.[2]
Lor. (*L C*). My Lord Bassanio, since you have found Antonio,
We two will leave you; but at dinner-time,
I pray you, have in mind where we must meet.
Bass. (*C*). I will not fail you.[3]
Gra. (*Crosses to R C.*) You look not well, Signior Antonio[4];
You have too much respect upon the world:
They lose it that do buy it with much care;
Believe me, you are marvellously changed.
Ant. (*R C*). I hold the world but as the world, Gratiano;
A stage where every man must play a part,
And mine a sad one.
Gra. (*C.*)[5] Let me play the fool:
With mirth and laughter let old wrinkles come,
I love thee, and it is my love that speaks –
There are a sort of men whose visages

[1]*Takes the stage to L C, meets Lorenzo L, who finishes talking to Bassanio, at the same time as Gratiano finishes speech.*

[2]*Exeunt Gratiano and Lorenzo off L laughing. Let laughter, like singing, begin and end gradually; do not begin or finish abruptly; and never make noises or conversation off the stage, to annoy the actors who are speaking on the stage.*

[3]*Bassanio goes over to L to wave hands to the retreating friend. Antonio crosses to L C, meets Bassanio there.*

Do cream and mantle like a standing pond,
And do a wilful stillness entertain,
With purpose to be dressed in an opinion
Of wisdom, gravity, profound conceit,
As who should say "I am Sir Oracle,
And when I ope my lips, let no dog bark!"
O my Antonio, I do know of these
That therefore only are reputed wise
For saying nothing. Fare ye well awhile:
I'll end my exhortation after dinner.[1]

Lor. (*L.*) Well, we will leave you then till dinner-time:
I must be one of these same dumb wise men,
For Gratiano never lets me speak.

Gra. (*L.*) Well, keep me company but two years more,
Thou shalt not know the sound of thine own tongue.

Ant. Farewell: I'll grow a talker for this gear.[2] (*They laugh and go off.*)

Bass. (*L.*)[3] Gratiano speaks an infinite deal of nothing, more than any man in all Venice. (*Antonio takes his arm.*)

Ant. (*L C.*) Well: tell me now what lady is the same

[1]*Sits L of seat L C.*

[2]*Stands behind seat then crosses to R end, back of seat. Bassanio, although what the English call a "bounder," doesn't exactly know how to broach the subject to his friend, as he wants to borrow money — always a delicate matter. A pause* (◠).

[3]*Asks him to sit on seat with him.*

[4]*Sitting R of seat by Antonio.*

[5]*This speech seems long, but it is almost impossible to cut it.*

To whom you swore a secret pilgrimage,
That you to-day promised to tell me of?[1]

Bass.[2] 'Tis not unknown to you, Antonio,
How much I have disabled mine estate,
By something showing a more swelling port
Than my faint means would grant continuance:
Nor do I now make moan to be abridged
From such a noble rate. To you, Antonio,
I owe the most, in money and in love,
And from your love I have a warranty
To unburden all my plots and purposes
How to get clear of all the debts I owe.

Ant. I pray you, good Bassanio, let me know it. (*He puts him at his ease*)
And if it stand, as you yourself still do,
Within the eye of honour, be assured,
My purse, my person, my extremest means,
Lie all unlocked to your occasions.[3]

Bass. In my school-days,[4] when I had lost one shaft,
I shot his fellow of the self-same flight
The self-same way with more advised watch,
To find the other forth, and by adventuring both
I oft found both: I urge this childhood proof,[5]
Because what follows is pure innocence.

[1]*Be careful to sound the "owe" distinctly as there are three vowel sounds coming together.*

[2]*An instance of the emphasized pronoun. I shall occasionally mark an important accent.*

[3]*This speech reads like an exercise in pronouns, so be careful not to accent them.*

[4]*Hesitatingly. Rising, if preferred.*

[5]*This speech is descriptive and should be delivered spontaneously — not precisely. Whatever you do — be natural. I have seen some college performances in which all the actors appeared like figures worked by electricity, or some mechanical contrivance. Do not take comedy seriously; and do not "elocute" but upon rare occasions. Get into the skin of a part: for acting, study the heart and mind of Shakespeare; hang the philology. In this way you will not say in after years, "I had too much of Shakespeare in college." It would be much more interesting to students to get up and rehearse the plays, along with the study, instead of sitting and just reading them.*

[6]*With rapture.*

[7]*Turning to Antonio and speaking with intention.*

I owe you much, and, like a wilful youth,
That which I owe[1] is lost but if you please
To shoot another arrow that self way
Which you did shoot the first, I do not doubt,
As I[2] will watch the aim, or to find both
Or bring your latter hazard back again
And thankfully rest debtor for the first.

Ant. You know me well, and herein spend but time
To wind about my love with circumstance;
Then do but say to me what I should do
That in your knowledge may by me be done,
And I am prest unto it: therefore, speak.[3]

Bass.[4] In Belmont is a lady richly left;
And she is fair and, fairer than that word,
Of wondrous virtues: sometimes from her eyes
I did receive fair speechless messages:
Her name is Portia,[5] nothing undervalued
To Cato's daughter, Brutus' Portia:
Nor is the wide world ignorant of her worth,[6]
For the four winds blow in from every coast
Renowned suitors. Had I but the means
To hold a rival place with one of them,[7]
I have a mind presages me such thrift,
That I should questionless be fortunate!

[1]*Thinking.*

[2]*Both rise.*

[3]*Bassanio goes over to Shylock's house. Bassanio knocks, the door is opened by Launcelot. Bassanio waves to Antonio and enters house. Antonio then goes up stage and is met by Gratiano and Lorenzo, who laugh and take him off up L. Several market people and others come on, making up a busy minute or so. Then, as they go off gradually up steps and off platform R and L, enter Bassanio from house followed by Shylock. There can be music, but not ragtime.*

Observe the colons: they always indicate a movement: a change of key: or some stage business.

The pronunciation of wind had better be left to the teacher. I pronounce the long i only when it rhymes with find, mind, kind, etc., that is a general English rule; accent thus' will indicate a strong accent.

With regard to "my" and "mine," it is our custom to pronounce them long when in antithesis to "thy" and "thine." In this line it would be incorrect to pronounce "my" long. It is not even an accented syllable — indeed, it is seldom so in Shakespeare, or any other cultivated writer. The modern egoist is all I, my, and mine: it is the spirit of this new

Ant.[1] Thou know'st that all my fortunes are at sea;
Neither have I money nor commodity
To raise a present sum: therefore go forth;[2]
Try what my credit can in Venice do:
That shall be racked, even to the uttermost,
To furnish thee to Belmont, to fair Portia.
Go, presently inquire, and so will I,
Where money is; and I no question make
To have it of my trust or for my sake.[3]

SCENE II. *Same.* (*No change necessary.*)

Enter SHYLOCK *from house R, following* BASSANIO.

Shy. (*R C*). Three thousand ducats; well.

Bass. (*L C*). Ay, sir, for three months.

Shy. For three months; well.

Bass. For the which, as I told you, Antonio shall be bound.

Shy. Antonio shall become bound; well.

Bass. May you stead me? Will you pleasure me? Shall I know your answer?

Shy. Three thousand ducats for three months and Antonio bound.

young age· but is, grammatically, incorrect and ugly.

A little music can be played to mark a short interval of time and action and is useful in connecting scenes and motives; Shakespeare gives a few directions for its use; but, it is very sure, musicians were present at all the plays.

[1]*Bassanio makes movement as if he did not quite understand Shylock's remark.*

[2]*Another slight movement.*

[3]*Shylock goes a little to R as if calculating the possibilities of a loan: he rattles coins in his satchel.*

[4]*Still calculating he turns to Bassanio, who is up stage, speaking rather louder.*

Bass. Your answer to that.

Shy. Antonio is a good man.

Bass. Have you heard any imputation to the contrary?

Shy. Oh, no, no, no, no: my meaning in saying he is a good man is to have you understand me that he is sufficient. Yet his means are in supposition: he hath an argosy bound to Tripolis, another to the Indies; I understand, moreover, upon the Rialto, he hath a third at Mexico, a fourth for England, and other ventures he hath squandered abroad. But ships are but boards, sailors but men; there be land-rats and water-rats, water-thieves and land-thieves[1] — I mean pirates — and then there is the peril of waters, winds and rocks.[2] The man is notwithstanding, sufficient.[3] Three thousand ducats; I think I may take his bond.

Bass. (*L C*). Be assured you may. (*He goes up L.*)

Shy. (*R C*). I will be assured I may; and, that I may be assured, I will bethink me.[4] May I speak with Antonio?

Bass. If it please you to dine with us. (*Still up stage L C*).

[1]*Both rather amused. Shylock must not appear rude here (as he so often does).*

[2]*This makes Bassanio mildly indignant.*

[3]*Shylock stands by his porch at R. This speech distinctly indicates that he intends to drive a hard bargain with Antonio.*

[4]*Upon the hip can be clearly indicated to audience by tapping the money bag which hangs on the belt at his right side.*

Shy. Yes, to smell pork[1]; to eat of the habitation which your prophet the Nazarite conjured the devil into[2]. I will buy with you, sell with you, talk with you, walk with you, and so following; but I will not eat with you, drink with you, nor pray with you. What news on the Rialto? Who is he comes here? (*Going R after seeing Antonio approaching from L U.*)

Enter Antonio up L; goes to him L C.

Bass. This is Signior Antonio.

Shy.[3] [*Aside.*] How like a fawning publican he looks!
I hate him for he is a Christian,
But more, for that in low simplicity
He lends out money gratis and brings down
The rate of usance here with us in Venice.
If I can catch him once upon the hip,[4]
I will feed fat the ancient grudge I bear him.
He hates our sacred nation; and he rails
Even there where merchants most do congregate
On me, my bargains, and my *well-won* thrift
Which he calls interest: cursed be my tribe
If I forgive him.

[1]*Shylock R. Bassanio L C. Antonio L.*

Note: Tubal is a happy thought of Shylock's.

[2]*Shylock has already seen Antonio, so that if he expresses surprise — it is feigned. He should give an oriental salute or bow here.*

[3]*He crosses in front of Bassanio to L C — Bassanio goes slowly to L.*

N. B. In stage business, it is the general rule to have a character cross in front of another when speaking — the other character gives the stage and then quietly takes the place of his companion. Also in all stage business the character speaking should have the stage; which means, that any speech of more than two lines should be spoken down, not up the stage; not actually facing the audience; but so that the voice goes out front, not up to the back-drop or wall of the room or hall.

I will, as far as possible, give you the general rules of the stage. One is seldom wrong in adopting them; a dramatic situation, or extra good or bad acting, occasionally demands an exception to the rule.

[4]*Referring to Bassanio — who acquiesces.*

[5]*The bond refers to Antonio's.*

Bass.[1] (*Both going down L C.*) Shylock, do you hear?

Shy. (*Xs to R C*). I am debating of my present store,
And, by the near guess of my memory,
I cannot instantly raise up the gross
Of full three thousand ducats. What of that?
Tubal, a wealthy Hebrew of my tribe,
Will furnish me. But soft! how many months
Do you desire? [*To Ant.*] Rest you fair, good signior;[2]
Your worship was the last man in our mouths.

Ant.[3] Shylock, although I neither lend nor borrow
By taking nor by giving of excess,
Yet, to supply the ripe wants of my friend,
I'll break a custom — Is he yet possessed
How much you would?

Shy. Ay, ay, three thousand ducats.

Ant. And for three months.

Shy. I had forgot; three months; you told me so.[4]
Well then, your bond;[5] and let me see; but hear you:

[1]*Calculating; then suddenly remembers.*

There has been a great deal of discussion lately on the morality of Shylock. Some people have taken exception to Shakespeare's diagnosis of a mercantile Jew — very common in his day. If I were a Scotchman, I might just as well object to the drawing of Macbeth's character, and his wife's — a pair of bloodthirsty villains. There are avaricious Jews, as well as greedy Scotchmen. To withdraw these two wonderful plays from the curriculum of Departments of English, on such absurd reasoning, is as foolish as to withdraw the Bible — the greatest book in the world.

[2]*The speeches here omitted may of course, be spoken.*

[3]*Shylock walks slowly R, then up R, then turns as if calculating figures on the ground.*

[4]*Antonio and Bassanio have been conversing and watching Shylock; then come forward L C.*

[5]*Shylock goes R C, and then to C.*

N. B. "For sufferance is the badge of all our tribe," should be indicated by a small yellow strip worn in the cap. It had to be so worn by Jew merchants in those days. Shylock slightly indicates this when speaking.

[6]*Shylock suits the actions to the words here.*

Methought you said you neither lend nor
borrow
Upon advantage.[1]

Ant. (*L C*). I do never use it.

Shy.[2] Three thousand ducats; 't is a good
round sum.
Three months from twelve; then, let me see;
the rate —

Ant.[3] Well, Shylock, shall we be beholding
to you?

Shy.[4] Signior Antonio, many a time and oft
In the Rialto you have rated me
About my moneys and my usances:
Still have I borne it with a patient shrug,
For sufferance is the badge of all our Tribe.[5]
You call me misbeliever, cut-throat dog
And spit upon my Jewish gaberdine,
And all for use of that — which is mine own!
Well then, it now appears you need my help:
What should I say to you? Should I not say
"Hath a dog money? is it possible
A cur should lend three thousand ducats?"[6] or
Shall I bend low and in a bondman's key,
With bated breath and whispering humbleness,
Say this:

[1]*There is a slight pause at the end of this speech, as both Antonio and Bassanio are somewhat disconcerted by the force of the argument.*

[2]*Shylock shrinks and feels resentment at his speech — but he must get a victory over Antonio, so he does not show his feelings.*

[3]*Very forcible — at the end of the speech Antonio and Bassanio move to go off L.*

[4]*Shylock turns and calls after them. They stop L, and half return.*

[5]*Shylock intends getting a point here. The "I" should be emphasized.*

[6]*Coming back to L C.*

"Fair sir, you spit on me on Wednesday last;
You spurned me such a day; another time
You called me dog; and for these courtesies
I'll lend you thus much moneys."[1] (*Do not move.*)

Ant. (*L C Xing to C.*) I am as like to call thee so again,
To spit on thee again,[2] to spurn thee too.
If thou wilt lend this money, lend it not
As to thy friends; for when did friendship take
A breed for barren metal of his friend?
But lend it rather to thine enemy,
Who, if he break,[3] thou mayst with better face
Exact the penalty. (*Going L.*)

Shy. (*R C*).[4] Why, look you, how you storm;
I would be friends with you and have your love,
Forget the shames that you have stained me with,
Supply your present wants and take no doit
Of usance for my moneys, and you'll not hear me:
This is kind *I* offer.[5]

Bass.[6] This were kindness.

Shy. (*Xs to C*). This kindness will I show:
Go with me to a notary, seal me there

[1]*Shylock must take this lightly.*

[2]*Hesitating.*

[3]*Pointing.*

N. B. This speech can of course be given in its entirety, as all the speeches may. The object of this arrangement is to adopt possible omissions to bring the play within a two hours' traffic of the stage.

[4]*Antonio moves to offer Shylock his hand and is prevented by Bassanio, who will not allow it. Shylock makes a movement too — as if glad to clinch the bargain.*

[5]*Here both parties quicken the pace till the end of scene, as they are now anxious to get the bargain concluded.*

N. B. The ends of scenes should be quickened — pace and intensity being necessary to impress audiences after long scenes between two or three characters.

Your single bond[1]; and, in a merry sport,
If you repay me not on such a day,
In such a place, such sum or sums as are
Expressed in the condition,[2] let the forfeit
Be nominated for an equal pound[3]
Of your fair flesh, to be cut off and taken
In what part of your body pleaseth me. (*Do not move.*)

Ant. (*L C*). Content, i' faith: I'll seal to such a bond
And say[4] there is much kindness in the Jew.

(*Antonio and Shylock both withdraw gloves as if to shake hands.*)

Bass.[5] You shall not seal to such a bond for me:
I'll rather dwell in my necessity.

Ant. (*L C*). Why, fear not, man; I will not forfeit it:
Within these two months, that's a month before
This bond expires, I do expect return
Of thrice three times the value of this bond.

Shy. (*up R*). Oh, Father Abram, what these Christians are; whose own harsh dealings teaches them suspect the thoughts of others: I say to *buy* his favour I extend this friendship —

[1]*Shylock makes a movement as of victory. Antonio of course does not owe Shylock any love, and his conduct in the matter is quite as reprehensible as Shylock's. Are we not continually meeting with similar situations in the ordinary affairs of up-to-date life? I think so. Christians, Jews, and anybody, are all ready to bargain with their neighbours.*

if he will take it so; if not, adieu, and for my *love* I pray you wrong me not.

Here Shylock moves off R — the others call to him this time.

Ant. (*L C*). Yes, Shylock, I will seal unto this bond.

Shy.[1] Then meet me forthwith at the notary's;
Give him direction for this merry bond,
And I will go and purse the ducats straight,
See to my house, left in the fearful guard
Of an unthrifty knave, and presently
I will be with you.

Ant. Hie thee, gentle Jew.

[*Exit Shylock off R or over platform.*

Ant. Come on; in this there can be no dismay;
My ships come home a month before the day.

[*Exeunt off L.*

END OF ACT I

The same scene later in the day. No interval necessary.

[1]*Launcelot runs on to the stage very quickly and stops C suddenly. He comes from house R.*

[2]*He starts to run L. Suddenly draws himself up.*

[3]*He taps his heart at each mention of the "conscience."*

[4-5]*He jumps R and L as he indicates running and stopping.*

[6]*Flicking his right thumb toward the house R.*

[7]*He suddenly starts off toward L. when he hears Old Gobbo's stick tapping on ground off L. Suddenly stands still L C.*

ACT II

Scene I

Laun. Certainly my conscience will serve me to run from this Jew my master.[1] The fiend is at mine elbow and tempts me, saying to me, "Gobbo, Launcelot Gobbo, good Launcelot," or "good Gobbo," or "good Launcelot Gobbo, use your legs, take the start, run away."[2] Well, my conscience, hanging about the neck of my heart, says very wisely to me[3]: "Launcelot, budge not."[4] "Budge," says the fiend;[5] "Budge not," say my conscience. "Conscience," say I, "you counsel well." "Fiend," say I, "you counsel well": to be ruled by my conscience, I should stay with the Jew my master;[6] my conscience is but a kind of hard conscience, to offer to counsel me to stay with the Jew. The fiend gives the more friendly counsel:[7] I will run, fiend; my heels are at your command; I will run.

[1]*Gobbo taps a stick in front of him, being blind.*

[2]*Takes hold of father and slowly turns him round till the lines are finished.*

[3]*Emphasize "master."*

[4]*More emphatic still*

Enter Old GOBBO, *with a basket.*

Gob.[1] Master young man, you, I pray you, which is the way to master Jew's?

Laun. [*Aside*] (*C*). O! heavens, this is my true-be-gotten father! who, being more than sand-blind, knows me not: I will try confusions with him.

Gob. (*Xs to L C.*) Master young gentleman, I pray you, which is the way to master Jew's?

Laun. Turn up on your right hand at the next turning,[2] but at the next turning of all, on your left; marry at the very next turning, turn of no hand, but turn down indirectly to the Jew's house.

Gob. Can you tell me whether one Launcelot, that dwells with him, dwell with him or no?

Laun. Talk of young Master Launcelot? [*Aside.*] Mark me now; now will I raise the waters. Talk you of young *Master* Launcelot?[3]

Gob. No master, sir, but a poor man's son.

Laun.[4] Ergo, Master Launcelot. Talk not of Master Launcelot, father; for the young gentleman, according to Fates and Destinies and such odd sayings, is indeed deceased, or

[1]*Pause on "terms," then point upward and "phizz," like the contents of a bottle flying.*

[2]*Launcelot teases his father all the time.*

[3]*Kneels.*

[4]*Gobbo feels for the son who is bending down so that his hand passes over his head.*

[5]*Gobbo, at last, finds Launcelot's head, and thinks it is his beard. Launcelot thinks it is a fine joke.*

as you would say in plain terms,[1] gone to heaven.

Gob. Marry, God forbid! the boy was the very staff of my age, my very prop.

Laun.[2] Do I look like a cudgel or a hovel-post, a staff or a prop? Do you know me father?

Gob. Alack the day, I know you not, young gentleman; but I pray you, tell me, is my boy, God rest his soul, alive or dead?

Laun. Do you not know me, father?

Gob. Alack, sir, I am sand-blind; I know you not.

Laun. Well, old man, I will tell you news of your son:[3] give me your blessing: truth will come to light; murder cannot be hid long; a man's son may, but at the length truth will out.

Gob.[4] Pray you, sir, stand up: I am sure you are not Launcelot, my boy.

Laun. Pray you, let's have no more fooling about it, but give me your blessing.[5] I am Launcelot, your boy that was, your son that is, your child that shall be.

Gob. Lord, how art thou changed. What a beard hast thou got! thou hast got more hair

[1]*At end of speech Launcelot embraces his father's legs, nearly pulling the poor old soul over; then the old man realizes it is his son. Launcelot gets up and they embrace. Then Gobbo speaks the next line.*

[2]*Showing things in basket, which is covered with a cloth, carried over the left arm.*

[3]*Launcelot takes his father's right hand and rubs it against his left-hand fingers, as if they were ribs.*

[4]*Bassanio can come on with two or three friends or servants, attendants, etc.; must be left to circumstances. A King, or Prince, or Doge, or Cardinal should always be attended.*

[5]*Launcelot puts his father forward, and bobs.*

[6]*Gobbo bobs, and puts his son forward.*

on thy chin than Dobbin my fill-horse has on his tail.

Laun. It should seem, then, that Dobbin's tail grows backward: I am sure he had more hair of his tail than I have of my face when I last saw him.[1]

Gob. How dost thou and thy master agree?[2] I have brought him a present.

Laun. My master's a very Jew; give him a present! give him a halter: I am famished in his service;[3] you may tell every finger I have with my ribs. Father, I am glad you are come: give me your present to one Master Bassanio, who, indeed, gives rare new liveries: if I serve not him I will run as far as God has any ground. O rare fortune! here comes the man: to him, father; for I am a Jew, if I serve the Jew any longer.

Enter BASSANIO.[4]

Laun. (*R C*). To him, father.[5]

Gob. God bless your worship!

Bass. Gramercy! wouldst thou aught with me?

Gob. Here's my son, sir, a poor boy, ——[6]

[1]*Launcelot bobs, and puts his father forward.*

[2]*Gobbo bobs, and puts his son forward.*

[3]*Launcelot bobs, and puts his father forward.*

[4]*Launcelot and father both bob.*

N. B. Peasants bob the knee now in parts of England, instead of bowing.

[5]*Launcelot leads his father to house R. At the entrance he stops, walks across as if to go in first, then pauses (old man bobbing all the time) and drags his father in. Bassanio laughs. Xs to R C.*

[6]*Launcelot's speech can be retained if desired.*

Laun. Not a poor boy, sir, but — the rich Jew's man; that would, sir, as my father shall specify ——[1]

Gob. He hath a great infection, sir, as one would say, to serve ——[2]

Laun. To be brief, the very truth is that the Jew, having done me wrong, doth cause me, as my father, being, I hope, an old man, shall frutify unto you ——[3]

Gob. I have here a dish of doves that I would bestow upon your worship, and my suit is ——

Bass. (*L C*). One speaks for both. What would you?

Laun. Serve you, sir.[4]

Gob. That is the very defect of the matter, sir.[5]

Bass. I know thee well; thou hast obtained thy suit.
Shylock thy master spoke with me this day,
And hath preferred thee. Go, father, with thy son.
Take leave of thy old master and inquire
My lodging out.[6]

[*Exeunt Launcelot and old Gobbo.*

[1]*Bassanio protests.*

Enter GRATIANO *L.*

Gra. (*L C*). Signior Bassanio!

Bass. (*R C*). Gratiano!

Gra. I have a suit to you.

Bass. You have obtained it.

Gra. You must not deny me: I must go with you to Belmont.

Bass. Why, then you must. But hear thee, Gratiano;
Thou art too wild, too rude and bold of voice;
Pray thee, take pains lest through thy wild behaviour I be misconstrued in the place I go to
And lose my hopes.
Signior Bassanio hear me:
If I do not put on a sober habit,
Talk with respect and swear;[1] but now and then, never trust me more.

Bass. Well, we shall see your bearing.

Gra. Nay, but I bar to-night: you shall not gauge me
By what we do to-night.

Bass. No, that were pity:
I would entreat you rather to put on
Your boldest suit of mirth. But fare you well:
I have some business. (*Going up steps R C.*)

[1]*Bassanio goes off up R. Gratiano down L.*

[2]*Looking around cautiously and taking coin out of bag which she wears; then the letter; taking Launcelot aside; then going back to porch.*

N. B. It all has the tone of secrecy. It is a mistake to make Jessica sympathetic. She is a designing and cunning person. Her great desire was to better herself. Shylock speaks lovingly of his wife Leah. It is his one sympathetic moment. His daughter certainly never contributed to the peace of his house. Leah perhaps died young. Even then a daughter's reverence for a mother's memory should count for something. On the other hand, it is just possible Shylock was not a good husband or father, and in that case Jessica had better have left his money alone. And should we not be offended with Lorenzo for helping her to steal it?

Gra. (*Xs to L*). And I must to Lorenzo and the rest:
But we will visit you at supper-time.[1]

[*Exeunt R. and L.*

Enter JESSICA (2) *and* LAUNCELOT (1) *from house R.*

Jes. R. I am sorry thou wilt leave my father so:
But fare thee well,[2] there is a ducat for thee:
And, Launcelot, soon at supper shalt thou see
Lorenzo, who is thy new master's guest:
Give him this letter; do it secretly;
And so farewell. I would not have my father
See me talk with thee.

Laun. Adieu! tears exhibit my tongue. These foolish drops do something drown my manly spirit: adieu.

Jes. Farewell, good Launcelot.

[*Exit Launcelot L.*

Alack, what heinous sin is it in me
To be ashamed to be my father's child!
But though I am a daughter to his blood,
I am not to his manners. O Lorenzo,

The lights should be lowered slightly.

The young men come on together from up L. The masquerade has practically commenced in the city. Occasional distant music can be heard.

[1]*Launcelot runs around wildly as if hunting for some one. Lorenzo recognizing him as Shylock's boy, eventually stops him at L C. Salanio goes behind, joins Gratiano and Salarino up R C.*

[2]*They all sigh up R C.*

[3]*Bows and makes as if to start home.*

If thou keep promise, I shall end this strife,
Become a Christian and thy loving wife.
[*Exit into house R.*

Enter GRATIANO(3), LORENZO(2), SALARINO(1), *and* SALANIO(4), *all from up L.*

Lor. (*L C*). Nay, we will slink away in supper-time,
Disguise us at my lodging and return,
All in an hour.

Gra. (*R C*). We have not made good preparation.

Salar. (*R*). We have not spoke us yet of torch-bearers.

Enter LAUNCELOT, *with a letter, very hastily from L.*

Lor. Friend Launcelot, what's the news?[1]

Laun. (*L C*). An it shall please you to break up this, it shall seem to signify.

Lor. I know the hand: in faith, 'tis a fair hand. (*Kisses letter*).

Gra. Love news i' faith.[2]

Laun. By your leave, sir.[3]

Lor. Whither goest thou?

[1]*Lorenzo gives him a coin. Launcelot is getting rich. He tosses it, bows and goes across to R C. He here bumps bowing, accidentally, against Gratiano. He turns, hints that his injuries deserve a tip, but not getting one, he walks in a very dignified manner across stage to house, makes an elaborate bow and exits. They all laugh as he goes off; then consult together.*

Laun. Marry, sir, to bid my old master the Jew to sup to-night with my new master the Christian.

Lor. Hold, here, take this, tell gentle Jessica I will not fail her; speak it privately.[1]

[*Exit Launcelot R.*

Go, gentlemen,
Will you prepare you for this masque to-night?
I am provided of a torch-bearer. Meet me and Gratiano at Gratiano's lodging some hour hence.

Salar. 'T is good we do so.

[*Exeunt Salar. and Salan. up steps and off L.*

Gra. (*R C*). Was not that letter from fair Jessica?

Lor. (*L C*). I must needs tell thee all. She hath directed
How I shall take her from her father's house,
What gold and jewels she is furnished with,
What page's suit she hath in readiness.
Come, go with me; peruse this as thou goest:
(*Kisses hand to balcony R.*)
Fair Jessica shall be my torch-bearer.

[*Exeunt up L.*

The stage has now become darker.

[1]*Jessica makes a movement to take the keys. Shylock withdraws his hand with keys in it.*

[2]*Shylock's whole speech may be spoken. I have purposely omitted in this stage arrangement as much reference as possible to the then existing dislike of Jews for Christians and Christians for Jews. Personally I never could and never shall knock into my possibly stupid head that Shakespeare intended to typify more than mere contrasts of character. Christians might just as well take personal offence at Richard III and others; and, in this very play, at young snobs like Gratiano and Lorenzo. But I imagine most sensible people enjoy the fun he makes of the cock-sure young dandies of the day who imagine that the entire town belongs to them. These young people seem to me to be with us to-day, just as they were three hundred years ago.*

Enter SHYLOCK (2) *and* LAUNCELOT (1) *from house R.*

Shy. (*R*). Well, thou shalt see, thy eyes shall be thy judge,
The difference of old Shylock and Bassanio: —— What, Jessica! — thou shalt not gormandize, As thou hast done with me: — What, Jessica! — And sleep and snore, and rend apparel out; — Why, Jessica, I say! (*Impatiently.*)

Laun. (*down L*). Why, Jessica!

Shy. (*R*). Who bids thee call? I do not bid thee call.

Laun. Your worship was wont to tell me that I could do nothing without bidding.

(*Enter* JESSICA *from house R.*)

Jess. (*R*). Call you? what is your will?

Shy. (*R C*). I am bid forth to supper, Jessica: There are my keys.[1] But wherefore should I go?
There is some ill a-brewing towards my rest, For I did dream of money-bags to-night.[2]

(*Xs to R.*)

Shylock's whole speech may be spoken.

Laun. (*L*). I beseech you, sir, go: my young master doth expect your reproach.

[1]*Jessica, who has crossed to L C, tries to silence Launcelot as he lets out about the masque.*

[2]*Shylock, who is R, turns quickly and goes C. Launcelot, afraid, goes down L. Jessica comes L C.*

[3]*Half inclined not to go, he unties scarf.*

[4]*Binds it around again.*

[5]*Still undecided, crosses to house R.*

[6]*Goes into house R. Gets lantern, stick, and hat.*

[7]*Whispers this.*

[8]*Reappears at door with lantern, stick, and hat on.*

Shy. (*R*). So do I his.

Laun. (*L*). An they have conspired together, I will not say you shall see a masque.[1]

Shy.[2] What, are there masques? (*Xs to C.*) Hear you me, Jessica! (*Gives her the keys.*) Lock up my doors; and when you hear the drum And the vile squealing of the wry-necked fife, Clamber not you up to the casements then, To gaze on Christian fools with varnished faces; Let not the sound of shallow foppery enter My sober house. By Jacob's staff, I swear, I have no mind of feasting forth to-night[3]: But I will go.[4] Go you before me, sirrah[5]; Say I will come[6];

Laun. (*Xs to R*). I will go before, sir.[7] Mistress, look out at window, for all this;
There will come a Christian by,
Will be worth a Jewess' eye.
(*Exit up R. behind house.*)

Shy. What says that fool of Hagar's offspring, ha?[8]

Jes. L. His words were "Farewell mistress"; nothing else. (*A deliberate fib!*)

Shy. (*R C*). The patch is kind enough, but a huge feeder;

[1]*Turns to go into house.*

[2]*Jessica, taken by surprise, drops keys L C. Shylock motions for her to pick them up; she does so.*

[3]*Shylock thinking Jessica is hesitating for a parental kiss, he takes her by the hand to give advice, and at the end, kisses her forehead.*

[4]*Nods familiarly to her and goes off the stage behind house R C (or up steps off R).*

[5]*Jessica pauses; then goes up quietly to see if he has gone; then comes down and goes hastily into house. (Compare Jessica, Regan, and Goñeril.)*

[6]*Lights should be lowered as it's now past sunset. A little masque music can be played here. Masquers can enter to make a short pause between Shylock's exit and the masquers' entrance. If masquers are on the stage they must be still during Lorenzo's speeches, but they can join in the escapade. All listening, etc. Music pp.*

Snail-slow in profit, and he sleeps by day
More than the wild cat.[1] Well, Jessica, go in:
Perhaps I will return immediately[2]:
Do as I bid you; shut doors after you[3]:
Fast bind, fast find;
A proverb never stale in thrifty mind.[4]
(*Exit up R.*)

Jes.[5] Farewell; and if my fortune be not crost, I have a father, you a daughter, lost.[6]
(*Exit into house R.*)

Enter GRATIANO *and* SALARINO, *masqued, from up R.*

Gra. (*Xs to R*). This is the pent-house under which Lorenzo
Desired us to make stand.

Salar. (*L*). His hour is almost past.

Gra. And it is marvel he out-dwells his hour,
For lovers ever run before the clock.

Enter LORENZO *L U.*

Lor. (*C*). Sweet friends, your patience for my long abode;
Not I, but my affairs, have made you wait:
Here dwells my father Jew. (*Xs to R.*) Ho! who's within?

[1]*The masquers should all have lanterns hidden. Jessica speaks in an undertone, as if it were the middle of the night. All the people half hide and listen, making the scene very picturesque. It is moonlight now. Music very soft from distance, up L.*

[2]*She throws it down. Lorenzo catches it, throws it at Gratiano, who is L C. Gratiano throws it to Salarino and Salanio, who are L.*

[3]*I have wondered if some of our zealous educationalists have ever studied the character of this detestable young woman. It is very easy nowadays to condemn the Jew of Shakespeare's time as a money grubber; but have these same zealots the courage to point out to the present generation of dominating sons and daughters the filial impiety of this selfish child? I fancy not.*

Enter JESSICA, *above, in boy's clothes on the balcony over porch.*

Jes.[1] Who are you? Tell me, for more certainty,
Albeit I'll swear that I do know your tongue.

Lor. (*R C*). Lorenzo, and thy love.

Jes. Lorenzo, certain, and my love indeed,
For who love I so much? And now who knows
But you, Lorenzo, whether I am yours?

Lor. (*R*). Heaven and thy thoughts are witness that thou art.

Jes. Here, catch this casket;[2] it is worth the pains.
I am glad 'tis night, you do not look on me,
For I am much ashamed of my exchange:
But love is blind, and lovers cannot see
The pretty follies that themselves commit;
For if they could, Cupid himself would blush
To see me thus transformed to a boy.

Lor. Descend, for you must be my torch-bearer.

Jes. I will make fast the doors, and gild myself
With some more ducats, and be with you straight.[3]
[*Exit above.*

[1]*Pronounced "Gentle"; it is here a play upon the word Gentile.*

[2]*Jessica here runs out in big disguise cloak. Lorenzo puts his arms around her. She throws keys down by door. They go off U L.*

[3]*There can be a dance here as upon Carnival.*

[4]*At the exit of Lorenzo and Jessica there is a general confusion of masquers. In the middle of the turmoil Antonio enters (also Shylock if deemed advisable); they are returning from the dinner. As the sounds die away, Antonio sees Gratiano; they go off L. Shylock watches his opportunity to go unobserved to the house. He finds the keys thrown under the porch. He nervously picks them up, looks around and opens the door as the curtain falls. Distant music and laughter.*

END OF ACT II.

Note: There are many ways of finishing this scene. Undoubtedly Shakespeare's own stage directions are best; but where our modern play-goers demand effective "curtains" I am inclined to think these directions are the most probable. Candidly I do not believe Shylock would rush around the house smashing up his own crockery, etc.

Gra. (*L C*). Now, by my hood, a Gentile[1] and no Jew.

Lor. (*R C*). Beshrew me but I love her heartily;

For she is wise, if I can judge of her,
And fair she is, if that mine eyes be true,
And true she is, as she hath proved herself,
And therefore, like herself, wise, fair and true,
Shall she be placed in my constant soul.[2]

Enter JESSICA, *below.*

What, art thou come? On, gentlemen; away
Our masquing mates by this time for us stay.[3]

(*Exit with Jessica and Salarino up L.*)

Enter ANTONIO *from R C.*[4]

Ant. Who's there?

Gra. Signior Antonio!

Ant. Fie, fie, Gratiano! where are all the rest?
'T is nine o'clock: our friends all stay for you.
No masque to-night; the wind is come about;
Bassanio presently will go abroad:
I have sent twenty out to seek for you.

Gra. I am glad on 't; I desire no more delight
Than to be under sail and gone to-night.

[*Exeunt off L C; other masquers following.*

END OF ACT II.

[1]*One of the attendants (or two), draw large curtains apart at C opening.*

N. B. The curtains should be really pulled by lines strung on separate rails from one side of the opening, and behind the scene; and thus appear to be pulled by the attendants. Have this done to time, or it appears awkward to an audience. Always assume that your audience does notice such things. It is apt to say things are splendid in the theatre; but outside, opinions change!

[2]*Portia goes R C, Nerissa comes to her R. Other attendants are R C, L C. Morocco's attendants remain at the L side.*

The various Princes go up L C to the top side of the table, so that they are facing the audience. There are various arrangements of this scene. But I believe this to be the best for the audience and the actors.

ACT III.

SCENE I. *Belmont. A room in* PORTIA'S *house.*[1]

Enter PORTIA *and* NERISSA.[2] *Or they are discovered working a tapestry C on seat centre.*

Por. (*C to L*). By my troth, Nerissa, my little body is aweary of this great world.

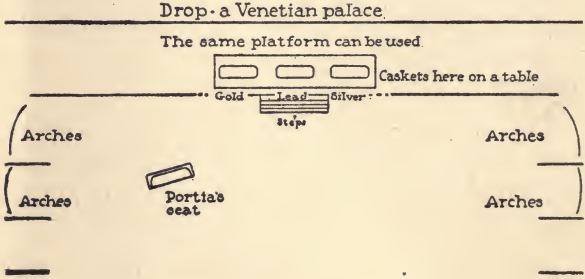
Ner. (*C to R*). You would be, sweet madam, if your miseries were in the same abundance as your good fortunes are: superfluity comes sooner by white hairs, but competency lives longer.

Por. Good sentences and well pronounced.

Ner. They would be better, if well followed.

Por. If to do were as easy as to know what were good to do, chapels had been churches, and poor men's cottages princes' palaces. It is a good divine that follows his own instructions: I can easier teach twenty what were good to be done, than be one of the twenty to follow mine own teaching. But this reason-

This scene must be taken brightly. Portia is a delicious person, and has a keen sense of humour. The scene is full of crisp wit, and should be made so by the performers. They can be seated; or on the Shakespearian stage would, of course, enter. Nerissa is a companion; not a waiting woman, like Maria.



ing is not in the fashion to choose me a husband. O me, the word choose! I may neither choose whom I would nor refuse whom I dislike; so is the will of a living daughter curbed by the will of a dead father. Is it not hard, Nerissa, that I cannot choose one nor refuse none?

Ner. Your father was ever virtuous; and holy men at their death have good inspirations: therefore the lottery that he hath devised in these three chests of gold, silver and lead, whereof who chooses his meaning chooses you, will, no doubt, never be chosen by any rightly but one who shall rightly love. But what warmth is there in your affection toward any of these princely suitors that are already come?

Por. I pray thee, over-name them; and as thou namest them, I will describe them; and, according to my description, level at my affection.

Ner. First, there is the Neapolitan prince.

Por. Ay, that's a colt indeed, for he doth nothing but talk of his horse;

Ner. Then there is the County Palatine.

Por. He doth nothing but frown. I had

[1]*She here measures him with her hand as being very short; they both laugh.*

[2]*They laugh.*

[3]*Portia points up in the direction of the caskets, which are now concealed behind a curtain.*

rather be married to a death's-head with a bone in his mouth, than to either of these.

Ner. How say you by the French lord, Monsieur Le Bon?

Por. God made him,[1] and therefore let him pass for a man.

Ner. What say you, then, to Falconbridge, the young baron of England?

Por. You know I say nothing to him, for he understands not me, nor I him. How oddly he is suited! I think he bought his doublet in Italy, his round hose in France, his bonnet in Germany, and his behaviour everywhere.[2]

Ner. How like you the young German, the Duke of Saxony's nephew?

Por. Very vilely in the morning, when he is sober, and most vilely in the afternoon, when he is drunk: when he is best, he is a little worse than a man, and when he is worse, he is little better than a beast.

Ner. If he should offer to choose, and choose the right casket, you should refuse to perform your father's will, if you should refuse to accept him.

Por.[3] Therefore, for fear of the worst, I

[1]*Loud laugh from both.*

[2]*A trumpet sound is heard outside up L.*

The trumpet call conveys the idea that it is a Venetian; which gives the cue for Nerissa's remark.

pray thee, set a deep glass of rhenish wine on the contrary casket, for if the Devil be within and that temptation without, I know he will choose it. I will do anything, Nerissa, ere I'll be married to a sponge.[1]

Ner. You need not fear, lady, the having any of these lords: they have acquainted me with their determinations; which is, indeed, to return to their home and to trouble you with no more suit, unless you may be won by some other sort than your father's imposition, depending on the caskets.

Por. I am glad this parcel of wooers are so reasonable, for there is not one among them but I dote on his very absence: and I wish them a fair departure.[2]

Ner. Do you not remember, lady, in your father's time, a Venetian, a scholar and a soldier, that came hither in company of the Marquis of Montferrat?

Por. Yes, yes, it was Bassanio — as I think, so was he called.

Ner. True, madam: he, of all the men that ever my foolish eyes looked upon, was the best deserving a fair lady.

Por. I remember him well, and I remember him worthy of thy praise.

Enter a Serving-Man (BALTHASAR) *up L.*

How now! What news?

Serv. The four strangers seek for you, madam, to take their leave: and there is a forerunner come from a fifth, the Prince of Morocco, who brings word the Prince his master will be here to-night.

Por. If I could bid the fifth welcome with so good a heart as I can bid the other four farewell, I should be glad of his approach. Come Nerissa. Sirra, go before (*servant exits up L*); whiles we shut the gate upon one wooer, another knocks at the door.

(PORTIA *and* NERISSA *remain on stage at R.*)

Reënter BALTHASAR *up L very excitedly to warn them the Prince is approaching.*

(*Continuous — no change of scene*)

Flourish of cornets. Enter the PRINCE OF MOROCCO, *followed by his train,* PORTIA, NERISSA, *and others curtseying.* NERISSA *goes R near* PORTIA; *the others group up R and L. There should be several attendants with the*

[1]*Two attendants draw aside curtains; if there are no curtains omit the words. Have the caskets arranged on a table up C, lead in the centre, gold R, silver L. The Prince goes up behind the table, and stands over it facing the audience.*

Prince, who go down L. Prince bows, saluting Portia. All attendants bow.

Mor. (*L C*). Mislike me not for my complexion,
The shadowed livery of the burnished sun,
To whom I am a neighbour and near bred.

Por. (*R C*). In terms of choice I am not solely led
By nice direction of a maiden's eyes;
Besides, the lottery of my destiny
Bars me the right of voluntary choosing:

Mor. Therefore, I pray you, lead me to the caskets
To try my fortune.

Por. You must take your chance,
And either not attempt to choose at all,
Or swear before you choose, if you choose wrong,
Never to speak to lady afterward
In way of marriage: therefore be advised.

Mor. Nor will not. Come, bring me unto my chance.

Por. Go draw aside the curtains and discover
The several caskets to this noble prince.[1]
Now make your choice.

The speeches of the suitors can, of course, be spoken without cuts.

Mor. How shall I know if I do choose the right?

Por. The one of them contains my picture, Prince:
If you choose that, then I am yours withal.

Mor. (*up C*). Some god direct my judgment! Let me see;
What says this leaden casket? (*Reading inscriptions on lid of casket.*)
"Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath."
Must give: for what? for lead? hazard for lead?
This casket threatens. Men that hazard all
Do it in hope of fair advantages:
A golden mind stoops not to shows of dross;
I'll then nor give nor hazard aught for lead.
What says the silver with her virgin hue?
"Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves."
As much as he deserves! Pause there, Morocco,
And weigh thy value with an even hand:
What if I strayed no further, but chose here?
Let's see once more this saying graved in gold:
"Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire."

[1]*A page at right goes to Portia. She takes a key from her chain, and gives it to the page, who carries a small cushion.*

[1]*He goes to the Prince and bows, offering key. From point of table the Prince takes it. The page bows and goes again to the right.*

[2]*Prince opens casket.*

N. B. The caskets should have their lids attached to leather or tape so that they do not fall open. They open backs to audience. Be sure and have the contents there, before the act is commenced.

Gold R, Lead C, Silver L, of speaker.

Prince of Morocco

Why, that's the lady; all the world desires her;
From the four corners of the earth they come,
To kiss this shrine, this mortal-breathing saint.
One of these three contains her heavenly picture.
Isn't like that lead contains her? 'Twere damnation
To think so base a thought: it were too gross
To rib her cerecloth in the obscure grave.
Or shall I think in silver she's immured,
Being ten times undervalued to tried gold?
O sinful thought! Never so rich a gem
Was set in worse than gold. They have in England
A coin that bears the figure of an angel
Stamped in gold, but that's insculped upon;
But here an angel in a golden bed
Lies all within. Deliver me the key:
Here do I choose, and thrive I, as I may![1]

Por. There, take it, Prince; and if my form lie there,
Then I am yours. [*He unlocks the golden casket.*][2]

Mor. What have we here?

[1]*This is a small skull, but can not be seen, as the lid of the casket is up on the audience side. The Prince appears to take the small scroll out of the skull. Unfolds it and reads. When read, he drops the scroll quietly into the box.*

[2]*He goes around L C from back of table, goes across to Portia, who comes forward, meeting him C. Kisses her hand.*

[3]*Goes up stage to L2 entrance. The group separates so that he goes off clearly, all bowing and curtseying till Prince is off. Pause: a moment. A general movement; attendants close the curtains.*

[4]*Flourish of trumpets at change of scene; and as signal of departing Prince.*

Drop for first scene comes down. If Shakespeare Theatre, all characters exit up L. Salarino and Salanio come quickly from down R and L, meeting each other.

A carrion Death,[1] within whose empty eye
There is a written scroll! I'll read the writing.
[*Reads.*]

All that glisters is not gold;
Often have you heard that told:
Many a man his life hath sold
But my outside to behold:
Gilded tombs do worms infold.
Had you been as wise as bold,
Young in limbs, in judgement old,
Your answer had not been inscrolled:
Fare you well; your suit is cold.

[*Lets scroll fall into box.*

Cold, indeed; and labour lost;
Then, farewell, heat, and welcome, frost!
Portia, adieu.[2] I have too grieved a heart
To take a tedious leave[3]: thus losers part.

[*Exit with his train.*[4]

Por. A gentle riddance. Draw the curtains, go.
Let all of his complexion choose me so.

[*Exeunt up L.*

SCENE II. *A street*

Enter SALARINO *and* SALANIO *from* R1 *and* L.

Salar. Why, man, I saw Bassanio under sail:
With him is Gratiano gone along;

In the Shakespeare Theatre rapidity of action, entrances, business, enables the actors to give the entire play in less time than a condensed scenic performance.

In this acting version a drop will descend in the front of the stage, leaving little more than room for the actors to cross each other.

This scene is most important for the development of the plot and is played very rapidly. Every one must be ready for the "Aragon" scene. See that the caskets and a chair R for Portia are ready. Seats cannot be used in the Belmont scenes except for the Bassanio scene: as he is not a prince the friends of Portia can be seated.

Salanio and Salarino need not take the scene seriously, until the serious moment, but they must not play for laughs.

And in their ship I am sure Lorenzo is not.

Salan. The villain Jew with outcries raised the Duke,
Who went with him to search Bassanio's ship.

Salar. He came too late, the ship was under sail:
But there the Duke was given to understand
That in a gondola were seen together
Lorenzo and his amorous Jessica.

Salan. I never heard a passion so confused,
As the dog Jew did utter in the streets:
"My daughter! O my ducats! O my daughter!
Fled with a Christian! O my Christian ducats!
And jewels, two stones, two rich and precious stones,
Stolen by my daughter! Justice! find the girl;
She hath the stones upon her, and the ducats."

Salar. Why, all the boys in Venice follow him
Crying, his stones, his daughter, and his ducats.

Salan. Let good Antonio look he keep his day,
Or he shall pay for this. (*Seriously.*)

Salar. Marry, well remembered.

[1]*Trumpets are heard at opening of scene. They continue till the Prince leading Portia, her friends and his friends are on. He should be a small, self-satisfied being, in direct contrast to both Morocco and Bassanio.*

I reasoned with a Frenchman yesterday,
Who told me, in the narrow seas that part
The French and English, there miscarried
A vessel of our country richly fraught:
I thought upon Antonio when he told me;
And wished in silence that it were not his.

Salan. You were best to tell Antonio what you hear;
Yet do not suddenly, for it may grieve him.

Salan. I pray thee, let us go and find him out (*going L*)
And quicken his embraced heaviness
With some delight or other.

Salar. (*Xs to him.*) Do we so.

[*Exeunt together off L.*

SCENE III

Belmont. A room in PORTIA'S *house.*
Very brightly. Enter NERISSA *with* BALTHASAR *from up L.*

ARAGON *is almost too small to lead* PORTIA *on, but he attempts it. Same disposition of characters as in* MOROCCO *scene. Music plays each time off stage pp.*[1]

[1]*If: failure seems an impossibility to him.*

[2]*This is where the "I" needs to be emphasized. Please be careful not to emphasize the personal pronouns; it is impolite and bad English to do so.*

Note: In this particular case: where the speaker is so self-important, it would be "I," "my," and "mine" all the time. Shakespeare carefully places the particles as the accented syllables — a rare occurrence — please note.

Ner. Quick, quick, I pray thee; draw the curtain straight:
The Prince of Arragon hath ta'en his oath,
And comes to his election presently. (*Goes R.*)

Flourish of cornets. Enter the PRINCE OF ARRAGON, PORTIA, *and their trains.*

Por. (*R C*). Behold, there stand the caskets, noble Prince:
If you choose that wherein I am contained,
Straight shall our nuptial rites be solemnized:
But if you fail, without more speech, my lord,
You must be gone from hence immediately.

Ar. I am enjoined by oath to observe three things:
First, never to unfold to any one
Which casket 't was I chose; next, *if* I fail[1]
Of the right casket, never in my life
To woo a maid in way of marriage;
Lastly, if *I*[2] do fail in fortune of my choice,
Immediately to leave you and be gone.

Por. To these injunctions every one doth swear
That comes to hazard for my worthless self.

(*Portia sits R.*)

[1]*The Prince goes up L C, to above table, giving his hat to an attendant L C. Portia goes to R C and sits watching; and undoubtedly amused.*

[2]*As eyeglasses had come into fashion, it is possible this Prince would hold one.*

[3]*Such slight omissions can be left to the discretion of the manager. Always remembering that two hours is a good limit for college plays.*

Ar. And so have I addressed me. Fortune now
To my heart's hope![1] Gold; silver; and base lead.
"Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath."
What says the golden chest? ha! let me see[2]:
"Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire."
What many men desire! that many may be meant
By the fool multitude, that choose by show,
Not learning more than the fond eye doth teach;
I will not choose what many men desire,
Because I will not jump with common spirits
And rank me with the barbarous multitudes.
Why, then to thee, thou silver treasure-house;
Tell me once more what title thou dost bear:
"Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves;"
And well said too; for who shall go about
To cozen fortune and be honorable
Without the stamp of merit? Let none presume
To wear an undeserved dignity.[3]

[1]*On opening the casket the Prince gives a look of disgust; as Morocco had given one of horror and real distress.*

[2]*The scroll is held by a bauble or doll, almost like our modern punchinello.*

[3]*The pronunciation of schedule must be left to custom. Shakespeare, or his copyist, in several places spells it scedule and skedule, as in "scheme." It is only an old English custom or fancy that calls it "schedule." In New England I hear it always pronounced with the k.*

[4]*He holds up the bauble, then drops it into the box with the scroll.*

[5]*Comes down to Portia R C, who rises. All curtsey.*

[6]*Prince and attendants make elaborate bows and flourishes. Trumpets sound till they are well off.*

Then Portia and her friends go into uncontrolled fits of laughter.

The attendants up R and L must help all these scenes by entering into the fun, or the seriousness of them, according to the situations.

"Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves."
I will assume desert. Give me a key for this,
And instantly unlock my fortunes here.[1]
(*He opens the silver casket.*)
Por. Too long a pause for that which you find there.
Ar. What's here? the portrait of a blinking idiot,[2]
Presenting me a schedule![3] I will read it.
How much unlike art thou to Portia!

[*Reads.*] The fire seven times tried this:
Seven times tried that judgement is,
That did never choose amiss.
Some there be that shadows kiss;
Such have but a shadow's bliss:
There be fools alive, I wis,
Silvered o'er; and so was this.

Still more fool I shall appear
By the time I linger here:
With one fool's head I came to woo,
But I go away with — two.[4]
Sweet, adieu.[5] I'll keep my oath,
Patiently to bear my wroth.[6]
[*Exeunt Arragon and train up L2.*

[1]*Curtains are drawn as before.*

[2]*Every one listens with great expectation to this speech.*

[3]*General excitement, and bustle at the end of this scene.*

[4]*They go off quickly; all the friends following as drop descends.*

N. B. It is a good plan — where scenery can be used — to have the lights checked for curtains. I would lower gradually, not suddenly; so that the pictures fade: the same when lights are raised. Let it be gradually. It also gives the audience a breathing moment. Unless otherwise indicated, the scenes are in daylight.

Por. Thus hath the candle singed the moth.
Por. Come, draw the curtain, Nerissa[1]
Serv. (*L*). Where is my lady?
Por. (*R C*). Here: what would my lord?
(*Laughing.*)
Serv. (*L C*).[2] Madame, there is alighted at your gate
A young Venetian, one that comes before
To signify the approaching of his lord;
A day in April never came so sweet,
To show how costly summer was at hand,
As this fore-spurrer comes before his lord.
Por. No more, I pray thee:[3] I am half afeard
Thou wilt say anon he is some kin to thee,
Thou spend'st such high-day wit in praising him.
Come, come, Nerissa; for I long to see
Quick Cupid's post that comes so mannerly.
Ner. Bassanio, lord Love, if thy will it be!
[*Exeunt all very joyfully.*[4]

SCENE IV. *Venice. A street.*
Enter SALANIO *and* SALARINO *at opposite entrances L and R.*

Salan. (*L*). Now, what news on the Rialto?
Salar. (*R*). Why, yet it lives there unchecked

[1]*Before Shylock enters there should be a distant buzz, as of a crowd off* R1. *Distant murmurs, shouts, music, etc., should be very carefully managed and are tremendously effective, if so done. There should always be a super-master where possible; he arranges and sees to such things.*

Women prompters are the best; they have so much more concentration and patience.

that Antonio hath a ship of rich lading wracked on the narrow seas; the Goodwins, I think they call the place; a very dangerous flat, and fatal, where the carcases of many a tall ship lie buried, as they say, if my gossip report be an honest woman of her word.

Salan. I would she were as lying a gossip in that as ever knapped ginger or made her neighbours believe she wept for the death of a third husband. But it is true, without any slips of prolixity or crossing the plain highway of talk, that the good Antonio, the honest Antonio, —— O that I had a title good enough to keep his name company!

Salar. Come, the full stop.

Salan. Ha! what sayest thou? Why, the end is, he hath lost a ship.

Salar. I would it might prove the end of his losses.

Salan. Let me say Amen betimes, lest the devil cross my prayer, for here he comes in the likeness of a Jew.

Enter SHYLOCK[1] *from R hurriedly, as if chased by a crowd; he goes right across stage, if there is a seat,*

he sinks exhausted on it. The young men almost spit at him as he passes; then follow him up.

How now, Shylock! what news among the merchants?

Shy. (*L*). You knew, none so well, none so well as you, of my daughter's flight.

Salar. (*R*). That's certain; I, for my part, knew the tailor that made the wings she flew withal.

Salan. (*R C*). And Shylock, for his own part, knew the bird was fledged; and then it is the complexion of them all to leave the dam.

Shy. She is damned for it. (*Rising.*)

Salar. That's certain, if the Devil may be her judge.

Shy. My own flesh and blood to rebel!

(*Crossing to C.*)

Salar. (*Xs to L C*). There is more difference between thy flesh and hers than between jet and ivory; more between your bloods than there is between red wine and rhenish. But tell us (*taking hold of him*), do you hear whether Antonio have had any loss at sea or no?

Shy. (*C*). There I have another bad match: a bankrupt, a prodigal, who dare scarce show his

head on the Rialto; a beggar, that was used to come so smug upon the mart; let him look to his bond: he was wont to call me usurer; let him look to his bond: he was wont to lend money for a Christian courtesy; let him look to his bond.

Salar. Why, I am sure, if he forfeit, thou wilt not take his flesh: what's that good for?

(*Going close to him.*)

Shy. To bait fish withal: if it will feed nothing else, it will feed my revenge. He hath disgraced me, and hindered me half a million; laughed at my losses, mocked at my gains, scorned my nation, thwarted my bargains, cooled my friends, heated mine enemies; and what's his reason? I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes? hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? Fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer as a Christian is. If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die? and if you wrong us, shall we not revenge? If we are like you in

[1]*Shylock can sit in this scene if it is in the Elizabethan or Shakespearian manner, as the stools will be placed. If with scenery it is difficult to have seats and stools in front scenes; but the power of the scene is such that it can be played in any form.*

the rest we will resemble you in that. If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his humility, revenge! If a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be by Christian example, why revenge! The villainy you teach me I will execute, and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction. (*Crosses to L.*)

Enter TUBAL *R.*

(*The young men spit on* TUBAL *as he comes across to* SHYLOCK.)

Salan. (*R*). Here comes another of the tribe: a third cannot be matched, unless the Devil himself turn Jew.

[*Exeunt* SALAN., SALAR., *and Servant.*

Shy. (*L*).[1] How now, Tubal! what news from Genoa? hast thou found my daughter?

Tub. (*L C*). I often came where I did hear of her, but cannot find her.

Shy. Why, there, there, there, there! a diamond gone, cost me two thousand ducats in Frankfort! The curse never fell upon our nation till now. I never felt it till now: two thousand ducats in that; and other precious, precious jewels. I would my daughter were

[1]*Shylock sinks on to stool or in Tubal's arms.*

[2]*Shylock looks up here expectantly.*

[3]*Shylock almost tears Tubal to pieces here.*

[4]*A deep thanksgiving; hands raised, then clasped.*

[5]*Joyfully.*

[6]*Tubal must be serious all through.*

[7]*Shylock almost staggers; then with hate and regret.*

N. B. Dissertations on the character of Shylock have occupied too many pages. Shakespeare wrote it in a humorous vein. Custom has perverted it to a serious character. If any actor can be superb in either view of the part, he will be blessed by his generation. Failing of these points of view, a compromise is advisable. But, from any point of view, it is as unnecessary for the Jews to feel offence as for the Scots to be annoyed over Macbeth; and, after all, no nation is full of perfect men and women.

dead at my foot, and the jewels in her ear: would she were hearsed at my foot, and the ducats in her coffin. No news of them? Why, so: and I know not what's spent in the search: why, thou loss upon loss! the thief's gone with so much, and so much to find the thief; and no satisfaction, no revenge: nor no ill luck stirring but what lights on my shoulders; no sighs but of my breathing; no tears but of my shedding.[1]

Tub. Yes, other men have ill luck too[2]: Antonio, as I heard in Genoa, ——

Shy.[3] What, what, what? ill luck, ill luck?

Tub. Hath an argosy cast away, coming from Tripolis.

Shy. I thank God, I thank God.[4] Is 't true, is 't true?

Tub. I spoke with some of the sailors that escaped the wrack. (*Old word for wreck.*)

Shy.[5] I thank thee, good Tubal: good news, good news! ha, ha! where? in Genoa? (*Laughing through his hate.*)

Tub.[6] Your daughter spent in Genoa, as I heard, in one night fourscore ducats.

Shy. Thou stick'st a dagger in me[7]: I shall

[1]*Tubal speaks as the real business-like merchant. Shylock undoubtedly feels the loss of his jewels and the desire to realize his wager with Antonio.*

[2]*Almost draws his knife* ——

[3]*It is rather difficult to know if Tubal meant to stir Shylock to revenge, but it is certainly a bad thrust.*

[4]*Strange to say, it calls forth the one pathetic moment in Shylock's stage existence. Leah and Tubal seem to be the only people he ever cared for. He certainly mistrusted his daughter. The attempt to whitewash Jessica is one of the silly traditions — it probably had to be acted by the stock "ingénue" — she is one of Shakespeare's six unpleasant women.*

[5]*This should be spoken in a torrent of rage and cupidity.*

[6]*Tubal goes off R, Shylock L.*

If Elizabethan, Shylock goes up to door, R U, and Tubal exits down R1.

[7]*Check lights. Drop descends.*

never see my gold again: fourscore ducats at a sitting! fourscore ducats!

Tub.[1] There came divers of Antonio's creditors in my company to Venice, that swear he cannot choose but break.

Shy. I am very glad of it: I'll plague him;[2] I'll torture him: I am glad of it. (*Here his vengeful joy almost masters him.*)

Tub.[3] One of them showed me a ring that he had of your daughter for a monkey.

Shy.[4] Out upon her! Thou torturest me, Tubal: it was my turquoise; I had it of Leah when I was a bachelor: I would not have given it for a wilderness of monkeys. (*He almost falls into Tubal's arms, and weeps.*)

Tub. But Antonio is certainly undone.

Shy. Nay, that's true, that's very true. Go, Tubal, fee me an officer; bespeak him a fortnight before. (*Quicken pace here till end.*) I will have the heart of him, if he forfeit;[5] for, were he out of Venice, I can make what merchandise I will. Go, go, Tubal, and meet me at our synagogue; go, good Tubal; at our synagogue, Tubal.[6] [*Exeunt.*

It would be better for the characters here to be discovered when drop ascends, and lights go up.

[1]*Peize is a French word to weigh out the time; to poise — pronounced pays.*

[2]*Bassanio goes up to table L C to C. Nerissa and the rest go up a little R and L. All silent. Portia sits on seat R C.*

[3]*The music sounds, then the song and chorus. There are many beautiful settings to this song. (See Chappell.)*

If possible the musicians should be on the stage in correct costumes. There should not be more than four or five at most. All should join in the refrain with the action of pulling the ropes of large bells. Suggestive of a wedding, of course. The music continues very softly through Bassanio's speech.

SCENE V. *Belmont. A room in* PORTIA'S *house.*

Enter BASSANIO, PORTIA, GRATIANO, NERISSA, *and* Attendants, *full of joyous expectation.*

Por. (*R C*). I pray you, tarry: pause a day or two
Before you hazard; for, in choosing wrong,
I lose your company: therefore forbear awhile.
I speak too long; but 'tis to peize the time,
To eke it and to draw it out in length,
To stay you from election.[1]

Bass. Let me choose;
For as I am, I live upon the rack.

Por. Away, then! I am locked in one of them.
If you do love me, you will find me out.[2]
Nerissa and the rest, stand all aloof.
Let music sound while he doth make his choice;
Then, if he lose, he makes a swan-like end,
Fading in music[3]:

Music, whilst BASSANIO *comments on the caskets to himself.*

[1]*There is a movement amongst the people. Portia has been watching this scene with intentness. She is seated.*

N. B. The point has been raised as to whether Portia knew which the right casket was. I can but say — "Of course she did" — she says so herself. It is part of her beautiful nature that she did not reveal it to any of the many suitors who had sought her hand.

SONG

Tell me where is fancy bred,
Or in the heart or in the head?
How begot, how nourished?
Reply, reply.
It is engendered in the eyes,
With gazing fed; and fancy dies
In the cradle where it lies.
Let us all ring fancy's knell:
I'll begin it — Ding, dong, bell.
All. Ding, dong, bell. (*As if ringing bells.*)

Bass. So may the outward shows be least themselves:
The world is still deceived with ornament.
In law, what plea so tainted and corrupt
But, being seasoned with a gracious voice,
Obscures the show of evil?
Thus ornament is but the guiled shore
To a most dangerous sea; the beauteous scarf veiling an Indian beauty. (*Music stops.*)
Therefore, thou gaudy gold,
Hard food for Midas, I will none of thee;
Nor none of thee, thou pale and common drudge
'Tween man and man: but thou, thou meagre lead,[1]

[1]*This is said almost with ecstasy.*

[2]*He takes a miniature out, looks at it, replaces it, takes scroll; after reading drops it in box.*

Which rather threat'nest than dost promise aught,
Thy paleness moves me more than eloquence;
And here choose I: joy be the consequence!

(*The page takes the key from Portia as before, and hands it to Bassanio.*)

Por.[1] O love,
Be moderate; allay thy ecstasy;
In measure rein thy joy; scant this excess.
I feel too much thy blessing: make it less,
For fear I surfeit.

Bass.[2] What find I here? (*Opening the leaden casket.*)
Fair Portia's counterfeit! What demi-god
Hath come so near creation? Here's the scroll,
The continent and summary of my fortune.

[*Reads.*] You that choose not by the view,
Chance as fair and choose as true'
Since this fortune falls to you,
Be content and seek no new.
If you be well pleased with this
And hold your fortune for your bliss,
Turn you where your lady is
And claim her with a loving kiss.

(*As Bassanio goes to Portia at R C, Gratiano begins appealing quietly to Nerissa up R.*)

[1]*She begins to kneel: Bassanio stops her.*
[2]*As Portia takes her ring, Nerissa takes hers.*

A gentle scroll. Fair lady, by your leave;
I come by note, to give and to receive.
As doubtful whether what I see be true,
Until confirmed, signed, ratified by you.

Por. (*R C*). You see me, Lord Bassanio, where I stand,
Such as I am: though for myself alone
I would not be ambitious in my wish,
To wish myself much better; yet, for you
I would be trebled twenty times myself;
A thousand times more fair, ten thousand times
More rich: But the full sum of me
Is sum of nothing; which, to term in gross
Is an unlessoned girl, unschooled, unpractised;
Happy in this, she is not yet so old
But she may learn; happier than this,
She is not bred so dull but she can learn;
Happiest of all is that her gentle spirit
Commits itself to yours to be directed,
As from her lord, her governor, her king.[1]
(*Slight pause.*)
Myself and what is mine to you and yours
Is now converted:[2] I give them with this ring;

[1]*Nerissa leads down Gratiano R C.*

Gratiano R C, Nerissa R C, Portia C, Bassanio C to L.

Making this very ardent.

Which when you part from, lose, or give away,
Let it presage the ruin of your love
And be my vantage to exclaim on you.

Bass. (*C*). Madam, you have bereft me of all words,
Only my blood speaks to you in my veins
But when this ring
Parts from this finger, then parts life from hence:
O, then be bold to say Bassanio's dead!

(*Bassanio here kisses Portia on the brow.*)

Ner. (*R C*).[1] My Lord and lady, it is now our time,
That have stood by and seen our wishes prosper,
To cry, good joy: good joy, my lord and lady!

Gra. (*R C*). My Lord Bassanio and my gentle lady,
I wish you all the joy that you can wish;
For I am sure you can wish none from me:
And when your honours mean to solemnize
The bargain of your faith, I do beseech you,
Even at that time I may be married too.

Bass. (*L C*). With all my heart, so thou canst get a wife.

Gra. I thank your lordship, you have got me one.

[1]*"I loved for intermission," is the correct reading according to Shakespeare's own prompt book (the Folio of 1623). It loses its humour if punctuated the other way "I loved," it means he loved for intermission in the meantime — during the interval. I hope you see it that way — so few professional actors do. The following sentence is a little awkward to read but it is compensated for by the rich humour of the joke: to save the awkwardness I have cut out the line following.*

[2]*Portia holds out her hand to Nerissa, who crosses quickly to her. Portia embraces her and they go up R; Bassanio Xs to Gratiano, takes his hand cordially, they go R.*

[3]*Salerio is another character if desired, but the lines are generally given to Salanio.*

[4]*Bassanio Xs to welcome Lorenzo and his party at L C. Portia Xs to C and curtseys to them; they all bow.*

My eyes, my lord, can look as swift as yours:
You saw the mistress, I beheld the maid;
You loved,[1] I loved for intermission.
(They all laugh.)
Your fortune stood upon the caskets there
So did mine too — as the matter falls
I got a promise of this fair one here
To have her love, provided that your fortune
Achieved her mistress.

Por. (*C*). Is this true, Nerissa?

Ner. (*R C*). Madam, it is, so you stand pleased withal.[2]

Bass. (*C*). And do you, Gratiano, mean good faith?

Gra. (*C to R.*) Yes, faith, my lord.

Bass. Our feast shall be much honoured in your marriage.

Gra. But who comes here?[3] Lorenzo and his infidel?
What, and my old Venetian friend Salanio?

Enter LORENZO, JESSICA, *and* SALERIO, (*or* SALANIO), *a messenger from Venice from L.*

Bass.[4] (*Crosses to L C.*) Lorenzo and Salerio, welcome hither; (*or Salanio*)
If that the youth of my new interest here

[1]*Bassanio goes across to seat R C.*
[2]*Portia watches him up R C.*

Have power to bid you welcome. By your leave,
I bid my very friends and countrymen,
Sweet Portia, welcome.

Por. (*Xs to them.*) So do I, my lord:
They are entirely welcome.

Lor. (*L C*). I thank your honour. For my part, my lord,
My purpose was not to have seen you here;
But meeting with Salanio by the way,
He did intreat me, past all saying nay,
To come with him along.

Salanio (*Xs to L C*). I did, my lord;
And I have reason for it. Signior Antonio
Commends him to you.

[*Gives Bassanio a letter and crosses to Gratiano up R.*

Bass. (*C*). Ere I ope his letter
I pray you, tell me how my good friend doth.

Saler. Not sick, my lord, unless it be in mind;
Nor well, unless in mind: his letter there
Will show you his estate.[1] [*Goes to chair R C.*[2]

Gra. (*R*). Nerissa, cheer yon stranger; bid her welcome.

[1]*Nerissa and Gratiano go from up R to up L, to talk to Jessica.*

N.B. Lorenzo and Jessica must not be too sure of their welcome at Portia's house: even in those days she would not countenance a Jewish elopement, any more than any undutifulness to a parent. Jessica is not intended by Shakespeare to be a martyr, any more than Shylock is — she is a thief: selfish and disobedient; though, not quite so seriously so, as Goneril and Regan. As a rule on the stage, Lorenzo and Jessica make themselves at home in a stranger's house, like a good many young folks of to-day are apt to do!

[2]*Bassanio is overcome by the sudden news from Antonio, and sinks on the seat.*

Your hand, Salanio what's the news from Venice?
How doth that royal merchant good Antonio?[1]
Por. There are some shrewd contents in yon same paper,
That steals the colour from Bassanio's cheek[2]:
With leave, Bassanio; I am half yourself,
And I must freely have the half of anything
That this same paper brings you.
Bass. (*Seated R C*). O sweet Portia,
Here are a few of the unpleasant'st words
Than ever blotted paper! (*Rises*) Gentle lady,
(*Xs to C. Portia is L C.*)
When I did first impart my love to you,
I freely told you, all the wealth I had
Ran in my veins; When I told you
My state was nothing, I should then have told you
That I was worse than nothing; for, indeed,
I have engaged myself to a dear friend,
Engaged my friend to his mere enemy,
To feed my means. Here is a letter, lady;
The paper as the body of my friend,
And every word in it a gaping wound,
Issuing life-blood. (*Xs to R C.*) But is it true,
Salerio? (*Salerio has gone R.*)

N. B. The description of Shylock's thirst for what he considered his rights in this case should not be misunderstood. In those days, the Jewish merchants were considered too anxious to be at the head of the commercial world, and Shylock here is, undoubtedly, anxious to take the place Antonio holds; — it was merely a race for wealth. The Jewish people of to-day should bear no more resentment to Shakespeare for drawing Shylock than the Scotch people should for the portrait of the cruel Macbeths; they were wholesale murderers; not even sparing women and children.

Have all his ventures failed? What, not one hit?
From Tripolis, from Mexico, and England,
From Lisbon, Barbary and India?
And not one vessel 'scape the dreadful touch
Of merchant-marring rocks?

(*All attend here. Don't let Lorenzo and Jessica, or any other of the young things, be talking about their friends, or their fashions, during the scene.*)

Saler. (*R C*). Not one, my lord.
Besides, it should appear, that if he had
The present money to discharge the Jew,
He would not take it. Never did I know
A creature, that did bear the shape of man,
So keen and greedy to confound a man:
He plies the Duke at morning and at night,
And doth impeach the freedom of the state,
If they deny him justice. Twenty merchants,
The Duke himself and the magnificoes
Of greatest port, have all persuaded with him;
But none can drive him from the envious plea
Of forfeiture, of justice and his bond.

Por. (*L C*). Is it your dear friend that is thus in trouble?

[1]*She whispers this to him.*

Bass. (*C*). The dearest friend to me, the kindest man,
The best conditioned and unwearied spirit
In doing courtesies, and one in whom
The ancient Roman honour more appears
Than any that draws breath in Italy.

Por. What sum owes he the Jew?

Bass. For me three thousand ducats.

Por. (*C*). What, no more? (*Xs to C.*) (*General movement.*)
Pay him six thousand, and deface the bond;
Double six thousand, and then treble that,
Before a friend of this description
Shall lose a hair through Bassanio's fault.
First,[1] go with me to church and call me wife,
And then away to Venice to your friend;
Bid your friends welcome, show a merry cheer:
Since you are dear bought, I will love you dear.
But let me hear the letter of your friend.

Bass. (*C*). [*Reads.*] Sweet Bassanio, my ships have all miscarried, my creditors grow cruel, my estate is very low, my bond to the Jew is forfeit; and since in paying it, it is impossible I should live, all debts are cleared between you and I, if I might but see you at my death. Notwithstanding, use your

The end of the act is full of animation, the characters all being interested.

Portia and Bassanio go up to L C followed by the rest of their friends; last of all Gratiano and Nerissa, they pause and kiss as the curtain falls. Lorenzo and Jessica can do the same, making the end of the scene humorous.

Special Note. The next two scenes can be omitted — they are very fine — but not actually necessary to the plot.

Salanio has explained Shylock's attitude; and the letter from Doctor Bellario explains the situation to the audience, of the young Doctor from Rome. (As this is arranged for acting, all omissions and restorations, are left to your own judgment.)

pleasure: if your love do not persuade you to come, let not my letter.

(*Play up with spirit to the end.*)

Por. (*C to L*). O love, dispatch all business, and be gone!

Bass (*C*). Since I have your good leave to go away,
I will make haste: but till I come again
No bed shall ere be guilty of my stay,
No rest be interposer twixt us twaine.

Curtain

SCENE VI. *Venice. A street.*

Enter SHYLOCK (1), SALARINO (2), ANTONIO (4), *and* Gaoler (3), *from R.*

Shy. (*R Xs to L C*). Gaoler, look to him: tell not me of mercy;
This is the fool that lent out money gratis:
Gaoler, look to him.

Ant. (*R C*). Hear me yet, good Shylock.

Shy. (*R C*). I'll have my bond; speak not against my bond:
I have sworn an oath that I will have my bond.

[1]*Gaoler crosses to R.*

Thou calledst me dog before thou hadst a cause;
But, since I am a dog, beware my fangs:
The Duke shall grant me justice. I do wonder,
Thou naughty gaoler, that thou art so fond
To come abroad with him at his request.

Ant. I pray thee, hear me speak.

Shy. I'll have my bond; I will not hear thee speak:
I'll have my bond; and therefore speak no more.

[*Exit L threateningly.*[1]

Ant. (*L C., Xs after Shylock*). I'll follow him no more with bootless prayers.
He seeks my life; his reason well I know:
I oft delivered from his forfeitures
Many that have at times made moan to me;
Therefore he hates me.

Salar. I am sure the Duke
Will never grant this forfeiture to hold.

Ant. The Duke cannot deny the course of law:
Well, gaoler, on. Pray God, Bassanio come
To see me pay his debt, and then I care not!

[*Exeunt R.*

[1]*Portia is seated at a table C, writing. Lorenzo stands near her at L C. Nerissa and Jessica are up R. (If Elizabethan, they enter.)*

[2]*Lorenzo kisses Portia's hand at L C.*

[3]*Jessica comes down and kisses Portia's hand at R C — then Lorenzo crosses to Jessica R C, and they go off R2.*

SCENE VII. *Belmont. A room in* PORTIA'S *house.*

Enter PORTIA, LORENZO, JESSICA, *and* BALTHASAR, *L.*[1]

Por. Lorenzo, I commit into your hands
The husbandry and manage of my house
Until my lord's return; for mine own part,
I have toward heaven breathed a secret vow
To live in prayer and contemplation,
Only attended by Nerissa here,
Until her husband and my lord's return:
There is a monastery two miles off
And there will we abide. I do desire you
Not to deny this imposition,
The which my love and some necessity
Now lays upon you.

Lor. (*L C*).[2] Madam, with all my heart;
I shall obey you in all fair commands.

Por. My people do already know my mind,
And will acknowledge you and Jessica
In place of Lord Bassanio and myself.[3]
And so farewell, till we shall meet again.

(*Going up L*).

[1]*Pause to get them off; then Portia calls Balthasar, who comes forward from L.*

[2]*Gives him letter, and delivers speech with great animation.*

[3]*Tranect is a machine which plied as the ferry.*

[4]*Balthasar is a youth full of enthusiasm.*

[5]*Portia rises, and the rest of the scene is delicious comedy.*

Lor. Fair thoughts and happy hours attend on you!

Jes. I wish your ladyship all heart's content.

Por. I thank you for your wish, and am well pleased
To wish it back on you: fare you well, Jessica.[1]
[*Exeunt Jessica and Lorenzo up R2.*]
Now, Balthasar (*he comes quickly from L*),
As I have ever found thee honest-true,
So let me find thee still. Take this same letter,[2]
And use thou all the endeavour of a man
In speed to Padua: see thou render this
Into my cousin's hand, Doctor Bellario;
And, look, what notes and garments he doth give thee,
Bring them, I pray thee, with imagined speed
Unto the tranect,[3] to the common ferry
Which trades to Venice. Waste no time in words,
But get thee gone: I shall be there before thee.[4]

Balth. Madam, I go with all convenient speed.[4] [*Exit running off L.*

Por. (*L C*).[5] Come on, Nerissa; I have work in hand
That you yet know not of: we'll see our husbands

[1]*She walks about like Rosalind.*
[2]*She goes toward L C, Nerissa follows.*

Though there are many arrangements — this is, I believe, the best way to set the scene. The same platform is used all through the 1*st act for Venice,* 3*rd act for the caskets,* 4*th for the Duke and the judges: there can be from* 2 *to* 12 *judges. The position of the tables is natural, and gives breadth and scope for all to be well seen by audience. It is, moreover, the traditional position of the furniture in a court of law. Tables have papers. On L table the bags of ducats. If the stage is Elizabethan, the Duke enters, followed by his judges.*

If a scenic stage — all are discovered.

Flourish of trumpets at beginning — till Duke is seated.

Before they think of us.

Ner. (*R. C*). Shall they see us?

Por.[1] They shall, Nerissa;
I'll hold thee any wager,
When we are both accoutred like young men,
I'll prove the prettier fellow of the two,
And wear my dagger with the braver grace,
And speak between the change of man and boy
With a reed voice, and turn two mincing steps
Into a manly stride, and speak of frays
Like a fine bragging youth, and tell quaint lies,
How honourable ladies sought my love.
But come,[2] I'll tell thee all my whole device
When I am in my coach, which stays for us

(*Goes up to entrance up L. Nerissa stops till Portia puts out her hand to go off.*)

At the park gate; and therefore haste away,
For we must measure twenty miles to-day.

[*Exeunt*

Curtain

END OF ACT III

ACT IV

SCENE I. *Venice. A court of justice.*

Enter the DUKE, *the* Magnificoes, ANTONIO, BASSANIO, GRATIANO, SALERIO, *and others all together up R.*

Duke. (*C*). What, is Antonio here?
Ant. (*R*). Ready, so please your grace.
Duke (*C*). I am sorry for thee: thou art come to answer
A stony adversary, an inhuman wretch
Uncapable of pity, void and empty
From any dram of mercy.
Ant. (*R C*). I have heard.
Your grace hath ta'en great pains to qualify
His rigorous course; but since he stands obdurate
And that no lawful means can carry me
Out of his envy's reach, I do oppose
My patience to his fury, and am armed

[1]*Antonio and Bassanio cross over to L C. There is a general movement as Shylock and Tubal come down the middle of the court from R3. A murmur.*

[2]*Deep silence.*

N. B. All who address the Duke must turn to him; half addressing him, and the audience.

To suffer, with a quietness of spirit,
The very tyranny and rage of his.

Duke. Go one, and call the Jew into the court.

Saler (*up R*). He is ready at the door: he comes, my lord.

Enter SHYLOCK (*R or up R with Tubal*).

Duke. (*C*). Make room, and let him stand before our face.[1]

(*Shylock salutes the Duke and stands R C.*)

Shylock, the world thinks, and I think so, too,
That thou but lead'st this fashion of thy malice
To the last hour of act; and then 't is thought
Thou 'lt show thy mercy and remorse more strange
Than is thy strange apparent cruelty;
And where thou now exact 's the penalty,
Which is a pound of this poor merchant's flesh,
Thou wilt not only loose the forfeiture,
But, touched with human gentleness and love,
Forgive a moiety of the principal;
Glancing an eye of pity on his losses,
That have of late so huddled on his back,
Enow to press a royal merchant down.
We all expect a gentle answer, Jew.[2]

[1]*Bassanio crosses to edge of table L C.*

Shy (*R C*). I have possessed your grace of what I purpose;
And by our holy Sabbath have I sworn
To have the due and forfeit of my bond:
If you deny it, let the danger light
Upon your charter and your city's freedom.
You'll ask me, why I rather choose to have
A weight of carrion flesh than to receive
Three thousand ducats. I'll not answer that;
But, say, it is my humour: is it answered?
Some men there are love not a gaping pig:
Some that are mad if they behold a cat.
Now for your answer, as there is no firm reason to be rendered: —
Why he cannot abide a gaping pig?
Why be a harmless necessary cat?
So can I give no reason, nor I will not,
More than a lodg'd hate, and a certain loathing
I bear Antonio, that I follow thus
A loosing suit against him. Are you answered?

Bass.[1] (*L C*). This is no answer, thou unfeeling man,
To excuse the current of thy cruelty.

Shy. (*R C*). I am not bound to please thee with my answers.

[1]*Shylock almost hisses these words at him, watches the effect, then goes to Tubal at R. Bassanio turns to Antonio, who is at his L.*

[2]*Antonio pauses a moment, then goes L C.*

[3]*Crosses here down to L C, appealing directly to the Duke.*

[4]*Bassanio takes the bags off L C table and goes to C, offering them to Shylock.*

[5]*Shylock goes forward, draws knife and touches the bags with it.*

[6]*Crosses back to Tubal R.*

Bass. (*L C*). Do all men kill the things they do not love?

Shy. (*R C*). Hates any man the thing he would not kill?

Bass. (*L C*). Every offense is not a hate at first.

Shy. (*R C*).[1] What, wouldst thou have a serpent sting thee twice?

Ant.[2] I pray you, think you question with the Jew:
You may as well go stand upon the beach
And bid the main flood bate his usual height;
You may as well do any thing most hard,
As seek to soften that — than which what's harder? —
His Jewish heart:[3] therefore, I do beseech you,
Make no more offers, use no farther means,
But with all brief and plain conveniency
Let me have judgment and the Jew his will.

Bass.[4] For thy three thousand ducats here is six.

Shy.[5] If every ducat in six thousand ducats
Were in six parts and every part a ducat,
I would not draw them; I would have my bond.[6]

[1]*Bassanio puts bags on table L C and goes back to Antonio L.*

[2]*Shylock's speech can, of course, be retained in its entirety.*

[3]*The law is contained in a book on the table at R C (where Portia will sit).*

[4]*Shylock pauses and waits for answer.*

[5]*Salerino is up R, he bows, goes near Duke, and then off up R.*

Duke. (*C*). How shalt thou hope for mercy, rendering none?[1]

Shy. (*R C*).[2] What judgment shall I dread, doing no wrong?
The pound of flesh, which I demand of him,
Is dearly bought; 't is mine and I will have it.
If you deny me,[3] fie upon your law!
There is no force in the decrees of Venice.
I stand for judgment:[4] answer; shall I have it?

Duke. (*C*). Upon my power I may dismiss this court,
Unless Bellario, a learned doctor,
Whom I have sent for to determine this,
Come here to-day.

Salar.[5] My lord, here stays without.
A messenger with letters from the doctor,
New come from Padua.

Duke. Bring us the letters; call the messenger.

Bass. (*L C*). Good cheer, Antonio! (*L*) What, man, courage yet!
The Jew shall have my flesh, blood, bones and all,
Ere thou shalt lose for me one drop of blood.

Ant. I am a tainted wether of the flock,
Meetest for death: the weakest kind of fruit

[1]*Salarino returns ushering in Nerissa, who goes quickly down the stage R, then up to middle of tables — bows.*

[2]*Gives letter to Clerk: Clerk bows and hands it to the Duke.*

[3]*At Nerissa's entrance, whilst the business with Duke is going on, Shylock kneels as if hidden by Tubal R; sharpens his knife on sole of shoe. Bassanio crosses to him from L C.*

N. B. The business should not be seen by the Duke. It seems impossible that it would be tolerated.

Drops earliest to the ground; and so let me:

Enter NERISSA, *dressed like a lawyer's clerk — but, please, not with a "college" cap; a little tight-fitting cap, like a Flemish picture.*

Duke. (*up C*).[1] Came you from Padua, from Bellario?

Ner. (*C*). From both, my lord. Bellario greets your grace.

(*Presenting a letter with back to audience*).[2]

Bass. Why dost thou whet thy knife so earnestly?[3]

Shy. (*R C*). To cut the forfeiture from that bankrupt there.

Gra. (*R*). Not on thy sole, but on thy soul, harsh Jew,
Thou mak'st thy knife keen; but no metal can,
No, not the hangman's axe, bear half the keenness
Of thy sharp envy. Can no prayers pierce thee?

Shy. No, none that thou hast wit enough to make.

Duke. (*C*). This letter from Bellario doth commend

[1]*Nerissa has remained standing whilst Duke reads.*

[2]*The words "three" or "four" can be omitted unless there is a crowd. Salarino and several others go off. Nerissa sits on stool R of R C table.*

[3]*Clerk rises, takes letter, bows to Duke and reads.*

A young and learned doctor to our court.
Where is he?

Ner. (*C*).[1] He attendeth here hard by,
To know your answer, whether you'll admit him.

Duke.[2] With all my heart. Some three or four of you
Go give him courteous conduct to this place.
Meantime the court shall hear Bellario's letter.[3]

Clerk. [*Reads.*] Your grace shall understand that at the receipt of your letter I am very sick: but in the instant that your messenger came, in loving visitation was with me a young doctor of Rome; his name is Balthasar. I acquainted him with the cause in controversy between the Jew and Antonio, the merchant: we turned o'er many books together: he is furnished with my opinion; which, bettered with his own learning, the greatness whereof I cannot enough commend, comes with him, at my importunity, to fill up your grace's request in my stead. I beseech you, let his lack of years be no impediment to let him lack a reverend estimation; for I never knew so young a body with so old a head. I leave him to your gracious acceptance, whose trial shall better publish his commendation.

[1]*All rise except the Duke when Doctor enters. He goes to Duke up R C, then on to steps.*

Note: Let Portia be dressed in a black cassock with many small red buttons, with a red loose gown and red cap: like a Rembrandt picture. Both Portia and Nerissa should be so well disguised that none of the men have any coznizance of them. Please ask the young men or ladies to be careful of their "make-ups": the present fashion of deep-redding and distorting the shape of the lips, and graying the eyelids by regular actors and actresses is hideous and deplorable and must not be copied by our young friends who use these books. If some of our really lovely actresses would realize how plain they make themselves look on the stage, the practice would undoubtedly be discontinued.

[2]*Doctor is shown to seat, down R of R C table; arranges books, papers, etc., then sits.*

[3]*Antonio moves down L C. Shylock moves down R C.*

Duke. You hear the learned Bellario, what he writes:
And here, I take it, is the doctor come.[1]

Enter PORTIA, *dressed like a Doctor of Laws (in red).*

Give me your hand. Come you from old Bellario?

Por. I did, my lord.

Duke You are welcome: take your place.[2]
Are you acquainted with the difference
That holds this present question in the court?

Por. (*sits R C*). I am informed thoroughly of the cause.
Which is the merchant here, and which the Jew?

Duke. Antonio and old Shylock, both stand forth.[3]

Por. Is your name Shylock?

Shy. Shylock is my name.

Por. Of a strange nature is the suit you follow;
Yet in such rule that the Venetian law
Cannot impugn you as you do proceed.
You stand within his danger, do you not?

Ant. Ay, so he says.

[1]*Portia can deliver the speech several ways. I strongly recommend the first five lines seated, rising at "the mightiest"—very little gesture to be used, perhaps only twice; at the words "it is an attribute to God himself" the right hand and finger to be raised; and at, "we do pray for mercy"; the action of appeal used to Shylock. (Don't elocute, be natural!)*

N. B. It is stronger for Portia to rely upon the words: lots of gesture and action is used later on in the scene: at the words, "I have spoke thus much," a movement away toward table, and at "'gainst the merchant there," a strong action, on "there," pointing to Antonio.

Por. Do you confess the bond?

Ant. (*L C*). I do.

Por. (*R C*). Then must the Jew be merciful.

Shy. (*R C*). On what compulsion must I? Tell me that.

Por. The quality of mercy is not strained;
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath. It is twice blest;
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes:
'T is mightiest in the mightiest;[1] it (*rises*) becomes
The throned monarch better than his crown:
His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,
The attribute to awe and majesty,
Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings;
But mercy is above this sceptred sway;
It is enthronèd in the hearts of kings,
It is an attribute to God himself;
And earthly power doth then show likest God's
When mercy seasons justice. Therefore, Jew,
Though justice be thy plea, consider this,
That, in the course of justice, none of us
Should see salvation: we do pray for mercy;
And that same prayer doth teach us all to render

[1]*Shylock becomes elated from this point.*

[2]*Portia sits again R of R C table.*

[3]*Bassanio comes forward with great earnestness.*

[4]*Kneels in front, at L C.*

N. B. Portia and Nerissa should be disguised beyond all recognition. If Portia is fair, she should now be dark, with a "clubbed" wig, and a cap to cover well over the head; the same applies to Nerissa; unless these disguises are complete, the scene loses its power. Neither of them wish the husband to discover the stratagem.

The deeds of mercy. I have spoke thus much
To mitigate the justice of thy plea;
Which if thou follow, this strict court of Venice
Must needs give sentence 'gainst the merchant there.

Shy.[1] My deeds upon my head! I crave the law,
The penalty and forfeit of my bond.

Por.[2] Is he not able to discharge the money?

Bass.[3] Yes, here I tender it for him in the court;
Yea, twice the sum: if that will not suffice,
I will be bound to pay it ten times o'er,
On forfeit of my hands, my head, my heart:
If this will not suffice, it must appear
That malice bears down truth.[4] And I beseech you,
Wrest once the law to your authority:
To do a great right, do a little wrong,
And curb this cruel devil of his will.

Por. It must not be; there is no power in Venice
Can alter a decree established:
'T will be recorded for a precedent,
And many an error by the same example

[1]*Gives bond which has been tucked in the girdle. Tubal carries the scales.*

[2]*Portia quickly looks over the bond.*

[3]*Said with seriousness.*

Will rush into the state: it cannot be.

Shy. (*R C*). A Daniel come to judgment! yea, a Daniel!

O wise young judge, how I do honour thee!

Por. I pray you, let me look upon the bond.

Shy.[1] Here 't is, most reverend doctor, here it is.

Por.[2] Why, this bond is forfeit;
And lawfully by this the Jew may claim
A pound of flesh, to be by him cut off
Nearest the merchant's heart. Be merciful:
Take thrice thy money; bid me tear the bond.

Shy. (*R C*). When it is paid according to the tenour.

It doth appear you are a worthy judge;
You know the law, your exposition
Hath been most sound: I charge you by the law,
Whereof you are a well-deserving pillar,
Proceed to judgment; by my soul I swear
There is no power in the tongue of man
To alter me:[3] I stay here on my bond.

Ant. Most heartily I do beseech the court
To give the judgment.

Por. (*rising*). Why then, thus it is:
You must prepare your bosom for his knife.

[1]*Draws knife from sheath.*

[2]*Bowing.*

[3]*Pointing to bond with knife.*

[4]*Indicates that Tubal carries them.*

[5]*Shylock looks at Doctor — then at the bond.*

[6]*After hunting for it: knowing it is not there.*

[7]*Portia sits, after speaking to Antonio. Antonio is L C, Bassanio L, by him; Shylock goes up R, consulting with Tubal.*

Shy.[1] O noble judge! O excellent young man!

Por. For the intent and purpose of the law
Hath full relation to the penalty,
Which here appeareth due upon the bond.

Shy. 'T is very true: O wise and upright judge!
How much more elder art thou than thy looks![2]

Por. Therefore lay bare your bosom.

Shy. Ay, his breast:
So says the bond:[3] doth it not, noble judge?
"Nearest his heart": those are the very words.

Por. It is so. Are there balance here to weigh the flesh?

Shy.[4] I have them ready.

Por. Have by some surgeon, Shylock, on your charge,
To stop his wounds, lest he do bleed to death.

Shy. Is it so nominated in the bond?[5]

Por. It is not so expressed: but what of that?
'T were good you do so much for charity.

Shy. I cannot find it;[6] 't is not in the bond.

Por. You, merchant,[7] have you anything to say?

[1]*Please keep this reading; it is Shakespeare's.*

[2]*Portia is seated at table examining books, deeds, etc.; at these words she makes a slight movement; speaks under her breath to Nerissa.*

N. B. These lines are a relief to the tension of the scene.

All the speech can be spoken. Always remember, please, that long speeches had better be abridged than spoken in a monotone. A long speech never seems long, if it is rendered with animation and vivacity. This particular speech hardly ever holds the attention, the figures of Portia and Shylock dominating. I advise cutting six middle lines.

[3]*Gratiano speaks thus, as he does all his speeches in this scene, to his friends at R.*

Ant. But little: I am armed and well prepared.
Give me your hand, Bassanio: fare you well!
Grieve not that I am fallen to this for you;
For herein Fortune shows herself more kind
Than is her custom. (It is still her use
To let the wretched man outlive his wealth,
To view with hollow eye and wrinkled brow
An age of poverty; from which lingering penance
Of such a misery doth she cut me off.)
Repent but you that you shall lose your friend,
And he repents not that he pays your debt;
For if the Jew do cut but deep enough,
I'll pay it instantly with all my heart.

Bass. Antonio, I am married to a wife
Which is as dear to me as life itself;
But life itself, my wife, and all the world,
Are not with me esteemed above thy life:
I would lose all; I sacrifice them all;[1]
Here to this devil, to deliver you.

Por.[2] Your wife would give you little thanks for that,
If she were by, to hear you make the offer.

Gra. (*R*).[3] I have a wife, whom, I protest, I love:

[1]*Nerissa speaks same manner as Portia.*

[2]*Shylock speaks with more motive than the others; he speaks to Tubal up R, and takes the scales.*

[3]*At this point, go down. Portia arises, every one attentive. Portia stands almost at end of table R C, almost C.*

[4]*At these words Shylock makes a rush like a wild animal; flourishing knife in right hand; scales hanging in L.*

[5]*Portia very quietly and deliberately*

[6]*Indicating bond.*

[7]*At the words "jot of blood," every one looks up. There has been a tremendous tension, a holding of breath, till this point.*

I would she were in heaven, so she could
Entreat some power to change this currish Jew.
Ner.[1] 'T is well you offer it behind her back;
The wish would make else an unquiet house.
Shy. (*up R*).[2] These be the Christian husbands. I have a daughter;
Would any of the stock of Barabbas
Had been her husband rather than a Christian!
We trifle time:[3] I pray thee, pursue sentence.
Por. (*C*). A pound of that same merchant's flesh is thine:
The court awards it, and the law doth give it.
Shy. (*R C*). Most rightful judge!
Por. And you must cut this flesh from off his breast:
The law allows it, and the court awards it.
Shy. (*R C*). Most learned judge! A sentence!
Come, prepare![4]
Por. Tarry a little;[5] there is something else.
(*Pause.*) This bond,[6] doth give thee here no jot of blood;[7]
The words expressly are "a pound of flesh":
Take then thy bond, take thou thy pound of flesh,
But, in the cutting it, if thou dost shed

[1]*At these words the Doctor sweeps up between the tables, directly appealing to Duke; Shylock dashes scales on ground.*

[2]*Gratiano speaks to his friends; not to the court. Be careful of this.*

[3]*Shylock sits at once, trying to find the judgment in the law books.*

[4]*Nerissa puts book for Shylock to read.*

One drop of Christian blood, thy lands and goods
Are, by the laws of Venice, confiscate
Unto the state of Venice.[1]

Gra. (*R*). O upright judge![2] Mark, Jew: O learned judge!

Shy.[3] Is that the law?

Por. Thyself shall see the act:[4]
For, as thou urgest justice, be assured
Thou shalt have justice, more than thou desirest.

Gra. (*R*). O learned judge! Mark, Jew: a learned judge!

Shy. (*rises R C*). I take this offer, then; pay the bond thrice
And let the Christian go.

Bass. (*Xs with bags*). Here is the money.

Por. (*C*). Soft! (*Stands between.*)
The Jew shall have all justice; soft! no haste:
He shall have nothing but the penalty.

Gra. (*R*). O Jew! an upright judge, a learned judge!

Por. (*C*). Therefore prepare thee to cut off the flesh.
Shed thou no blood, nor cut thou less nor more
But just a pound of flesh: if thou cut'st more

[1]*Drops knife.*

N. B. Please be sure that Gratiano does not address his speeches to the court, but to his friends at R. It is far more effective to make his remarks quietly, with pointed humour.

[2]*Shylock is here beside himself with anger and indignation.*

[3]*With a sweep of the hand the Doctor hands him back the bond.*

Or less than a just pound, be it but so much
As makes it light or heavy in the substance,
Or the division of the twentieth part
Of one poor scruple, nay, if the scale do turn
But in the estimation of a hair,
Thou diest:[1] and all thy goods are confiscate.

[*The scene rises here to its climax.*

Gra. (*R*). A second Daniel, a Daniel, Jew!
Now, infidel, I have thee on the hip.

Por. (*C*). Why doth the Jew pause? take thy forfeiture.

Shy. (*R C*). Give me my principal, and let me go.

Bass. (*L C*). I have it ready for thee; here it is.

Por. (*C*). He hath refused it in the open court:
He shall have merely justice and his bond.

Gra. (*R*). A Daniel, still say I, a second Daniel!
I thank thee, Jew, for teaching me that word.

Shy.[2] Shall I not have barely my principal?

Por. Thou shalt have nothing but the forfeiture,
To be taken so at thy peril, Jew.[3]

[1]*Shylock takes it and scrunches it up, and stamps upon it; is going up R with Tubal, when the Doctor's words stop them.*

[2]*Nerissa hands the book to Portia.*

[3]*This whole speech absolutely pulverizes Shylock and he crawls to the middle of the table.*

[4]*Kneels down C, appealing to Duke.*

Note: No one wants to hear any more of Gratiano.

Shy. Why, then the Devil give him good of it![1]
I'll stay no longer question.
Por. (*Coming round to seat.*) Tarry, Jew:
The law hath yet another hold on you.
It is enacted in the laws of Venice [2]
If it be proved against an alien
That by direct or indirect attempts
He seek the life of any citizen
The party 'gainst the which he doth contrive
Shall seize one half his goods; the other half
Comes to the privy coffer of the state;
And the offender's life lies in the mercy
Of the Duke only, 'gainst all other voice.
In which predicament, I say, thou stand'st:
For it appears, by manifest proceeding,
That indirectly, and directly too,
Thou hast contrived against the very life
Of the defendant; and thou hast incurred
The danger formerly by me rehearsed
Down therefore;[3] and beg mercy of the Duke.[4]
Duke. That thou shalt see the difference of our spirits,
I pardon thee thy life before thou ask it:
For half thy wealth, it is Antonio's;

[1]*Portia is seated R C.*

Shylock crawls over to Portia, appealing for leniency.

[3]*Shylock listens, and at the end, when asked to become a Christian, he rises almost dumb with horror, making strong appeal to Antonio.*

[4]*This is the climax of Shylock's misfortunes. He acts and moves now like a crushed being.*

The other half comes to the general state,
Which humbleness may drive unto a fine.

Por. Ay, for the state,[1] not for Antonio.

Shy. Nay, take my life and all;[2] pardon not that:
You take my house when you do take the prop
That doth sustain my house; you take my life
When you do take the means whereby I live.

Por. What mercy can you render him, Antonio?[3]

Ant. So please my lord the Duke, and all the court,
To quit the fine for one half of his goods,
I am content; so he will let me have
The other half in use, to render it,
Upon his death, unto the gentleman
That lately stole his daughter:
Two things provided more, that, for this favour,
He presently become a Christian;
The other, that he do record a gift,
Here in the court, of all he dies possessed,
Unto his son Lorenzo, and his daughter.[4]

Duke. He shall do this, or else I do recant

[1]*He is now quite overcome.*

[2]*Clerk busily writes; but do not scratch.*

[3]*At the end of the speech he drops into Tubal's arms, who leads him up R.*

[4]*In passing, Gratiano puts his hand on Shylock's arm, and hisses those words in his ear.*

Shylock looks scornfully at him, brushes his hand off and totters out of court with Tubal. There are many ways of Shylock exits. I have seen a modern actor take about five minutes to get off. This is a big mistake artistically, for it is impossible that it could have happened.

At exit of Shylock a general movement of joy — Duke comes down R C; meets Doctor.

[5]*Duke crosses to Antonio, takes his hand, then gives right hand to Doctor, who conducts him up R.*

Trumpets at Duke's exit, followed by all the judges who have sat by Duke; they rise when he rises, consulting each other during trial, and go off with Duke. With regard to by-play: Do not ever make it obtrusive, or cause a divided interest upon the stage. If you are to talk — talk in pantomime; and always moderately.

After Duke's exit there is a general break up of the tension — Gratiano from R, Bassanio and Antonio from L, surround Doctor and Clerk; both come down C.

The pardon that I late pronounced here.

Por. Art thou contented, Jew? what dost thou say?

Shy.[1] I am content.

Por.[2] Clerk, draw a deed of gift.

Shy.[3] I pray you, give me leave to go from hence;
I am not well: send the deed after me,
And I will sign it.

Duke. Get thee gone, but do it.

Gra.[4] In christening shalt thou have two godfathers:
Had I been judge, thou shouldst have had ten more,
To bring thee to the gallows, not the font.

[*Exit Shylock up R with Tubal.*

Duke (*C*). Sir, I entreat you home with me to dinner.

Por. I humbly do desire your grace of pardon:
I must away this night toward Padua,
And it is meet I presently set forth.

Duke (*C*).[5] I am sorry that your leisure serves you not.
Antonio, gratify this gentleman;

[1]*She gives a knowing look at Bassanio.*

[2]*They are Bassanio's gloves she wants, also Bassanio's ring. There is absolutely no authority for indicating that they are Antonio's gloves; such a request would certainly spoil half, if not all, the comedy, of the next scenes.*

N. B. The first Folio gives no stage direction that they are any one's but Bassanio's; the accent on the "love" and not on the "your," indicates that they are not Antonio's. It is unlikely that on such occasion Antonio would have gloves, although it is the custom of all men of means to wear them; and they are necessary in these plays. Over-coloured hands and lips are ugly, often entirely marring expression.

For, in my mind, you are much bound to him.

[*Exeunt Duke and his train.*

Bass. (*L C*). Most worthy gentleman, I and my friend
Have by your wisdom been this day acquitted
Of grievous penalties; in lieu whereof,
Three thousand ducats, due unto the Jew,
We freely cope your courteous pains withal.

Ant. (*L C*). And stand indebted, over and above,
In love and service to you evermore,

Por. (*C*). He is well paid that is well satisfied;
And I, delivering you, am satisfied;
And therein do account myself well paid;
I pray you, know me when we meet again:
I wish you well, and so I take my leave.

Bass. (*L C*). Dear sir, of force I must attempt you further: (*Bassanio puts on gloves.*)
Take some remembrance of us, as a tribute,
Not as a fee: grant me two things, I pray you;
Not to deny me, and to pardon me.

Por. (*C*).[1] You press me far, and therefore I will yield.
[*To Bass.*] Give me your gloves.[2] (*He takes one off*). I'll wear them for your sake;

[1]*In taking off gloves he shows the ring and draws back his hand.*

[2]*Taken by surprise and apologetically.*

[3]*He hands her the gloves.*

[4]*Very casually even beginning to go.*

[5]*Portia looks around at him when he says "wife" — credulously — she fears her husband is a bit of a humbug. She is putting on the gloves during this speech.*

And for your *love*, I'll take this ring from you:[1]
Do not draw back your hand; I'll take no more;
And you in love shall not deny me this.

Bass.[2] This ring, good sir, alas, it is a trifle! (*Takes off other glove.*)
I will not shame myself to give you this.

Por. I will have nothing else but only this;
And now methinks I have a mind to it.

Bass. (*L C*). There's more depends on this than on the value.
The dearest ring in Venice will I give you,
And find it out by proclamation:
Only for this, I pray you, pardon me.[3]

Por. (*C*).[3] I see, sir, you are liberal in offers:[4]
You taught me first to beg; and now methinks
You teach me how a beggar should be answered.

Bass. (*L C*). Good sir, this ring was given me by my wife;[5]
And when she put it on, she made me vow
That I should neither sell nor give nor lose it.

Por. (*C*). That 'scuse serves many men to save their gifts.
And if your wife be not a mad-woman,
And know how well I have deserved the ring,
She would not hold out enemy for ever,

[1]*At the exit she waves her hand — her left hand — to Bassanio up R. Nerissa does the same business to Gratiano, following Portia up R.*

[2]*At the end of the scene Antonio's friends surround him, and take him off to have a good time.*

The Clerks are still writing when scene finishes. If Elizabethan, they gather up the tables, stools, papers, etc., and take them off with much animation. Be very careful to have all such details thoroughly carried out.

On a scenic stage this is the end of the Fourth Act. Curtain falls. There may be a little distant music.

For giving it to me.[1] Well, peace be with you!

[*Exeunt Portia and Nerissa.*

Ant. L C. My Lord Bassanio, let him have the ring:
Let his deservings and my love withal
Be valued against your wife's commandment.

Bass. C. Go, Gratiano, run and overtake him;
Give him the ring, and bring him, if thou canst,
Unto Antonio's house: away! make haste.

[*Exit Gratiano off up R.*

Come, you and I will thither presently;
And in the morning early will we both
Fly toward Belmont:[2] come, Antonio.

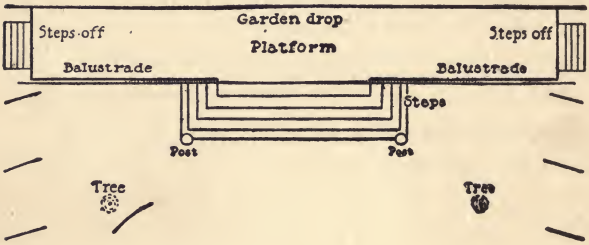
[*Exeunt.*

END OF ACT IV

In setting the scenes the platform and steps can be used all through the comedy — in all the full scenes.

On scenic stage, lights lowered: to moonlight.

[1]*Lorenzo and Jessica should be looking out over the terrace. He is on her left side.*



ACT V

SCENE I. *Belmont. Avenue to* PORTIA'S *house.*

Enter LORENZO *and* JESSICA *on platform*

Lor.[1] The moon shines bright: in such a night as this,
When the sweet wind did gently kiss the trees,
And they did make no noise.

Jes. In such a night
Did Thisbe fearfully o'ertrip the dew
And saw the lion's shadow ere himself
And ran dismayed away.

Lor. In such a night
Stood Dido with a willow in her hand
Upon the wild sea banks and waft her love
To come again to Carthage.

Jes. In such a night
Medea gathered the enchanted herbs
That did renew old Æson.

Lor. In such a night

[1]*Launcelot runs around smacking his whip and jumping. He carries a lantern.*

In Elizabethan theatre lanterns and torches are carried to indicate night-time.

[2]*He kisses his hand to Jessica, when Lorenzo runs across R after him; this brings Lorenzo to R of Jessica.*

Did Jessica steal from the wealthy Jew
And with an unthrift love did run from Venice
As far as Belmont.

Jes. In such a night
Did young Lorenzo swear he loved her well,
Stealing her soul with many vows of faith
And ne'er a true one.

Lor. In such a night
Did pretty Jessica, like a little shrew,
Slander her love, and he forgave it her.

Jes. I would out-night you, did nobody come;
But, hark, I hear the footing of a man.

Enter LAUNCELOT *from L.*

Laun.[1] Sola, sola! wo ha, ho! sola, sola!

Lor. Who calls?

Laun.[1] Sola! did you see Master Lorenzo! and Mistress Lorenzo, sola, sola!

Lor. (*R C*). Leave hollaing, man: here.

Laun. Sola! where? where?

Lor. Here.

Laun. (*L C*). Tell him there's a post come from my master, with his horn full of good news: (*Xs to R*) My master will be here ere morning — sweet soul.[2] [*Exit R.*

[1]*Musicians can either enter, or play off stage up R, very softly.*

[2]*Lorenzo's speech can, of course, be restored if the young man who plays it has a good voice delivery and manner; but it must be natural. It is remarkable that Shakespeare should put such wonderful thoughts into the mind of such an extremely ordinary young person, for they surely were quite lost upon the young woman.*

[3]*Portia and Nerissa should have travelling dresses and cloaks.*

[4]*They go down steps to Lorenzo and Jessica, who are so preoccupied that they do not hear Portia's approach.*

Enter Musicians.

Come, ho! and wake Diana with a hymn:[1]
With sweetest touches pierce your mistress' ear
And draw her home with music. [*Music.*

Jes. I am never merry when I hear sweet music.

Lor. The reason is, your spirits are attentive:[2]
The man that hath no music in himself,
Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds,
Is fit for treasons, stratagems and spoils:
The motions of his spirit are dull as night
And his affections dark as Erobus:
Let no such man be trusted: mark the music.

Enter PORTIA (1) *and* NERISSA (2) *on terrace from L.*

Por.[3] That light we see is burning in my hall.
How far that little candle throws his beams!
So shines a good deed in a naughty world.
Music, hark!

Ner. It is your music, madam, of the house.

Por. Nothing is good, I see, without respect:
Methinks it sounds much sweeter than by day.[4]
Peace, ho! the moon sleeps with Endymion
And would not be awaked. [*Music ceases.*

[1]*Kisses Portia's hand — Jessica also.*

[2]*Nerissa goes up steps and off R, returning in a moment. Nerissa returns.*

[3]*Gratiano goes to Nerissa up R C. Lorenzo and Jessica go off, after a few lines R L, as if to the house.*

Lor. (*rising Xs to R C*). That is the voice,
Or I am much deceived, of Portia.
Por. He knows me as the blind man knows the cuckoo,
By the bad voice. (*They laugh.*)
Lor.[1] Dear lady, welcome home.
Por. (*C*). We have been praying for our husbands' healths,
Which speed, we hope, the better for our words.
Are they returned?
Lor. Madam, they are not yet;
But there is come a messenger before,
To signify their coming.
Por. Go in, Nerissa;
Give order to my servants that they take
No note at all of our being absent hence;[2]
Nor you, Lorenzo; Jessica, nor you.
(*A tucket sounds off L.*)
Lor. (*L C*). Your husband is at hand; I hear his trumpet:
We are no tell-tales, madam; fear you not.
Por. (*C*). This night methinks is but the daylight sick;
It looks a little paler: 't is a day.
Such as the day is when the sun is hid.[3]

[1]*Embrace.*

[2]*Antonio bows; Portia crosses to his L C.*

[3]*Gratiano and Nerissa are up R.*

Grat. R, Nerissa R, Portia C, Bass. L C, Ant. L.

Enter BASSANIO (1), ANTONIO (2), GRATIANO (3), *and their followers from L* 2.

Por. (*C*). You are welcome home, my lord.

Bass.[1] I thank you, madam. Give welcome to my friend.[2]
This is the man: this is Antonio,
To whom I am so infinitely bound.

Por. Sir, you are very welcome to our house:
It must appear in other ways than words,
Therefore I scant this breathing courtesy.

Gra. (*R to Ner.*).[3] By yonder moon I swear you do me wrong;
In faith, I gave it to the judge's clerk.

Por. (*L C*). A quarrel, ho, already! what's the matter? (*Xing to C.*)

Gra. (*R*). About a hoop of gold, a paltry ring
That she did give me, whose posy was
For all the world like cutler's poetry
Upon a knife, "Love, me, and leave me not."

Ner. (*R C*). What talk you of the posy or the value?
You swore to me, when I did give it you,
That you would wear it till your hour of death,
And that it should lie with you in your grave.
Though not for me, yet for your vehement oaths,

[1]*Gratiano measures the height of the "boy" each time, emphasizing the word.*

[2]*Portia looks round gradually, fixing Bassanio with her gaze; he winces under it.*

You should have been respective and have kept it.
Gave it a judge's clerk! no, God's my judge,
The clerk will ne'er wear hair on 's face that had it.

Gra. (*R*). He will, an if he live to be a man.

Ner. (*R C*). Ay, if a woman live to be a man.

Gra. (*L C*).[1] Now, by this hand, I gave it to a *youth*,
A kind of *boy*, a little scrubbed *boy*,
No higher than thyself; the judge's clerk,
A prating *boy*, that begged it as a fee:
I could not for my heart deny it him.

Por. (*C*). You were to blame, I must be plain with you.
To part so slightly with your wife's first gift;
A thing stuck on with oaths upon your finger
And so riveted with faith unto your flesh.[2]
I gave my love a ring, and made him swear
Never to part with it; and here he stands;
I dare be sworn for him he would not leave it
Nor pluck it from his finger, for the wealth
That the world masters. Now, in faith, Gratiano,

[1]*Same business at "boy," each time.*

[2]*Slowly; it seems incredible!*

[3]*Portia, acting the shrew, goes up stage in disgust. Bassanio follows; they go up and down two or three times C to R; C to L C; finishing C. Gratiano and Nerissa do the same, up and down R.*

This stage business is funny if done quietly; but it must not be too boisterous.

You give your wife too unkind a cause of grief:
An 't were to me, I should be mad at it.

Bass. (*L C*). [*Aside.*] Why, I were best to cut my left hand off
And swear I lost the ring defending it.

Gra. (*R C*). My Lord Bassanio gave his ring away
Unto the judge that begged it, and indeed
Deserved it too; and then the *boy*,[1] his clerk,
That took some pains in writing, he begged mine;
And neither man nor master would take aught
But the two rings.

Por. (*C*).[2] What ring gave you, my lord?
Not that, I hope, which you received of me.

Bass. (*L C*). If I could add a lie unto a fault,
I would deny it; but you see my finger
Hath not the ring upon it; it is gone.

Por.[3] Even so void is your false heart of truth.

Bass. Sweet Portia,
If you did know to whom I gave the ring,
If you did know for whom I gave the ring,
And would conceive for what I gave the ring,
And how unwillingly I left the ring,
When nought would be accepted but the ring,

[1]*Antonio has patiently remained, mildly protesting, and somewhat amused. Possibly, he is glad he is not married!*

You would abate the strength of your displeasure.

Por. If you had known the virtue of the ring,
Or half her worthiness that gave the ring,
Or your own honour to contain the ring,
You would not then have parted with the ring.
Nerissa teaches me what to believe:
I'll die for 't but some woman had the ring.

Bass. (*L C*). No by my honour, madam, by my soul,
No woman had it, but a civil doctor,
Which did refuse three thousand ducats of me
And begged the ring; the which I did deny him
And suffered him to go displeased away;
Even he that did uphold the very life
Of my dear friend. What should I say, sweet lady?
I was enforced to send it after him;

Ant. (*L*).[1] I am the unhappy subject of these quarrels.

Por (*C*). Sir, grieve not you; you are welcome notwithstanding.

Bass. (*L C*). Portia, forgive me this enforced wrong;
Pardon this fault, and by my soul I swear

[1]*Bassanio and Gratiano both raise hands with rings, and say, "By Heaven!" then cross hands over several times to each other, to make sure.*

[2]*Lorenzo and Jessica return up R. Pause!*

[3]*Portia and Nerissa come down R and L and kneel beside their husbands. The two men laugh and raise them up; then all laugh. It is merry to the end.*

I never more will break an oath with thee.

Ant. (*L*). I once did lend my body for his wealth,
Which, but for him that had your husband's ring,
Had quite miscarried: I dare be bound again,
My soul upon the forfeit, that your lord
Will never more break faith advisedly.

Por. (*Xs to L*). Then you shall be his surety. Give him this
And bid him keep it better than the other.

Ant. Here, Lord Bassanio; swear to keep this ring.

Bass.[1] By Heaven it is the same I gave the doctor!

Por. (*kneeling*).[2] I had it of him. Pardon, Bassanio.

Ner. (*kneeling.*) And pardon me, my gentle Gratiano.

Gra. (*raising her, Bassanio at the same time raising Portia*). Why, this is like the mending of highways in summer, where the ways are fair enough.

Por. (*L C*). You are all amazed:[3]
Here is a letter; read it at your leisure;

-Those tiresome young people, Lorenzo and Jessica, stroll on again here. Their presence is the only thing that spoils the end of the comedy.

[2]Jessica, greedy to the last, tries to snatch the letter from Nerissa, who very promptly corrects her at the words, "after his death."

[3]Portia gives her left hand to Bassanio, who is C; her right hand to Antonio, who is L. They all go up steps and off R.

It comes from Padua, from Bellario:
There you shall find that Portia was the doctor,
Nerissa there her clerk.
(*Astonishment and great joy all round.*)
Antonio, you are welcome;
And I have better news in store for you
Than you expect. Unseal this letter soon.
There you shall find three of your argosies
Are richly come to harbour suddenly.

Bass. (*C*). Were you the doctor and I knew you not?

Ant. (*L*). Sweet lady, you have given me life and living;
For here I read for certain that my ships
Are safely come to road.

Por. (*L C*).[1] How now, Lorenzo!
My clerk had some good comforts too for you.

Ner. Ay, and I'll give them him without a fee.
There do I give to you and Jessica,
From the rich Jew, a special deed of gift —[2]
(After his death) of all he dies possessed of.
[*They go up to L C.*

Por. (*L C*). It is almost morning,[3]
And yet I am sure you are not satisfied

[1]*Gratiano and Nerissa go up R C.*

Lorenzo and Jessica go up L C.

They all kiss and the curtain falls. Antonio laughs. Do not have a dance: it is out of place — absurd in fact: so early in the morning!

Of these events at full. Let us go in;
And charge us there upon inter'gatories[1]
And we will answer all things faithfully.

(*A little music plays softly from within during last speech.*)

[*Exeunt.*

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